# OLD DIPLOMACY & NEW

## FROM SALISBURY TO LLOYD GEORGE

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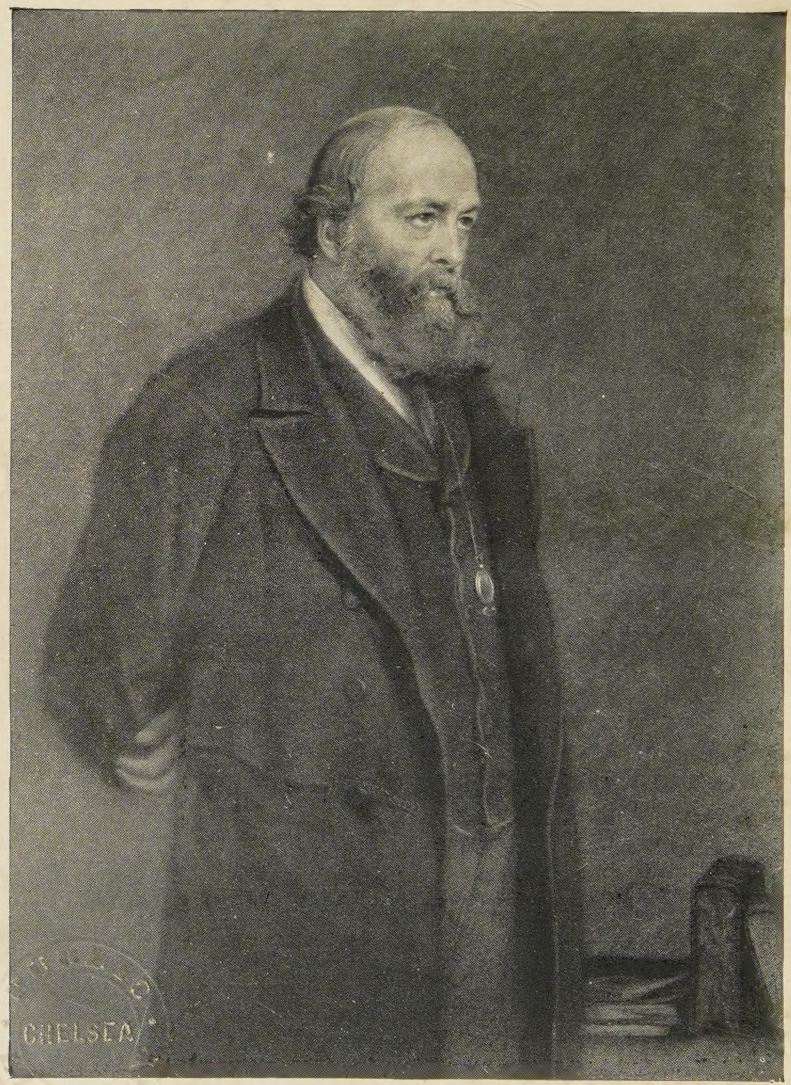
CHELSEA

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ROBERT GASCOYNE CECIL, 3RD MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.

[*Frontispiece.*

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# OLD DIPLOMACY AND NEW

1876–1922

FROM SALISBURY TO LLOYD GEORGE

BY A. L. KENNEDY, M.C.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY SIR VALENTINE CHIROL

CHELSEA PUBLIC LIBRARY

WITHDRAWN FROM STOCK.

"There is no subject on which we are so misinformed as our foreign policy . . . it is of primary, of paramount importance: upon our foreign policy the safety as well as the glory of this country as a great Empire depends. . . ."—DISRAELI.

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# PREFACE

DESPITE the fact that the murder of an Austrian Archduke was the occasion of our being involved in a world-war; and although there is an obvious connection between unemployment at home and the condition of Continental Europe, the general public seems hardly to consider the vital importance to its daily life of Foreign Affairs. Unskilled conduct of our Foreign Policy—not merely at moments of crisis, but from month to month—may bring ultimate unavoidable disaster: its skilful conduct brings respect, prosperity, and peace.

This book is an attempt to study the personal methods of those who, in recent years, have directed the Foreign Policy of Britain; and to place in perspective before the general reader some of the chief events of that policy since the period when most history books end—in the hope that the British public, insular and imperial, may be led to devote more attention to the study of Foreign Affairs. For in the world's politics there is no greater force than British public opinion.

In the chapters on the entry into the war of Italy and Bulgaria, and in one or two of the later chapters, access has been allowed to the author to sources not available to the general public. Otherwise no claim is made to bring to light original documents. A consecutive account is given of events abroad which each attracted great attention at the moment, but the correlation of which is easily missed by people engrossed in home affairs. At the time British action was often the decisive factor in the settlement of matters which only indirectly concerned us: and as diplomacy under the impulse of Mr Lloyd-George has become democratised it is likely in the future to be effective or ineffective

in proportion as it is based upon an informed or an indifferent public opinion.

It would be a particular gratification if members of the Labour Party should find time to peruse these pages. Its leaders should and will be called upon, before many years are past, to direct the foreign policy of the British Empire. At the present time their public utterances convey the impression that the one positive purpose of their policy would be the maintenance of peace. Peace is an object desired by all rational persons, of whatsoever Party. But a study of Foreign Politics seems to show that peace, like happiness, cannot be wooed or won directly; it is a blessing that neither skill, nor wealth, nor pliability can ensure. It comes to nations, as to individuals, only indirectly as a consequence of responsibilities properly faced and tasks well fulfilled.

The British Commonwealth of Nations has incurred responsibilities greater than those of any other nation. It must discharge them, or decline. Its position has been challenged in the past, and will probably be challenged again. We could not shirk the issue raised by Germany. It might perhaps have been only a bloodless struggle—a conflict of political ideals and commercial rivalry—if we had stood up to our challengers more determinedly in its earlier stages, and particularly from 1912, the year in which Sir Edward Grey's propitiatory advances had once more been rebuffed. We must either prove our title to be the world's greatest civilising and administrative Power, or abandon our position.

But the Washington Conference of 1922 has given birth to the hope that there may be a third alternative —we may be able to share our duties with the other great branch of the English-speaking race.

31*st May* 1922.

# INTRODUCTION

By Sir VALENTINE CHIROL

Since the term diplomacy first came to be applied in the days of Richelieu to the conduct of international affairs between civilised nations, no period in the world's history, even during the French Revolution or the Napoleonic Wars, has witnessed such profound changes in social, economic, and political conditions as the four or five decades of which Mr Kennedy has carefully and ably recorded the diplomatic vicissitudes. That diplomacy itself should have been profoundly affected by them was inevitable, but whether the changes which it has undergone suffice to justify the distinction which he draws between an "old" and a "new" diplomacy may perhaps be doubted.

I remember the time when Bismarck was credited with having introduced a new diplomacy, of which the distinguishing characteristic was *une franchise qui frise la brutalité;* but few could venture to follow his lead in that direction, and in spite of all his affectation of frankness, it is to him that we owe two of the most notorious illustrations of "secret diplomacy" in his editing of the famous Ems despatch in July 1870, and in his secret Reinsurance Treaty with Russia just after he had publicly concluded the Austro-German alliance. We boast now, it is true, that the days of "secret diplomacy" are over, but, with the single exception of Washington, can anything be more obscure than the "open diplomacy" practised at the endless conferences which have followed the Paris Peace Conference? Another method which Bismarck did not indeed originate but developed on an unprecedented scale as an instrument of diplomacy was the organisation of a "reptile" Press directly controlled by a special department of the Berlin Foreign Office, and that method unquestionably found, and has retained, many imitators ready to use the Press though

with much less than Bismarckian skill for the purpose of expounding and glorifying their own statesmanship.

Let us look back for a moment to the Berlin Congress of 1878, which may be regarded as the last great achievement of the "old diplomacy," and compare it with the Paris Peace Conference which was to put the "new diplomacy" to the severest test. If we judge the two solely by results we may be inclined to share the preference not unnaturally entertained for the former by our author, who as the son of a distinguished British diplomat of the Victorian school, Sir John Gordon Kennedy, was himself brought up in its atmosphere. The Treaty of Berlin at any rate secured peace in Europe for a considerable number of years, whereas the Treaty of Versailles has not yet restored real peace in any part of the world. But how different, how much smaller the world was, and how much narrower the issue with which the Berlin plenipotentiaries had to deal. In the first place such men as Bismarck, then at the height of his power in Germany, and the old Russian Chancellor, Prince Gortchakoff, and the brilliant Hungarian Minister, Count Andrassy, might have to reckon with their Sovereigns' idiosyncrasies, but hardly at all with popular opinion. Even in England the Crown still wielded considerable power, and Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed Queen Victoria's boundless confidence as well as the support of a large parliamentary majority. These were the leading figures in Berlin. They were all men of Conservative instincts, and their task as they conceived it was above all to conserve the existing balance of European forces. It was a question they were trained to handle on the accustomed lines of the "old diplomacy," and they were free to do so, as the horrors of war, far less horrible then than they are now, had been confined to a small corner of the world, and the masses in most European countries were more or less indifferent, and still largely inarticulate. From the first, too, there was a certain measure of agreement amongst the majority of the European Governments that the Ottoman Empire had to be saved from the dismemberment with which it was threatened by the Treaty of San Stefano, imposed upon the Sultan by Russia when her victorious armies had reached the suburbs of Constantinople. Great Britain had given a strong lead, for Lord Beaconsfield represented with a fervour partly due no doubt to his

Oriental ancestry, the school of British statesmanship for whom the Ottoman Empire was a bulwark essential to the safety of British dominion in the East against Russian expansion across Asia towards the gates of India. France, who had not yet recovered from the disasters of the Franco-Prussian War, and Italy, whose national unity was still recent, were both disposed to lend some support to British policy, as neither of them viewed without some apprehension the growth of Russian influence in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean. Austria-Hungary was brought still nearer to England by her traditional jealousy of Russian ascendancy in the Balkan peninsula. Bismarck's chief anxiety was to preserve intact the old dynastic friendship between Germany and Russia which had stood him in such good stead during the three wars waged by him in the creation of the new German Empire, and at the same time to promote the reconciliation between Germany and Austria-Hungary which had ensued from the morrow of Sadowa. His life-work had been achieved when the King of Prussia was proclaimed German Emperor in the *Galerie des Glaces* at Versailles, and henceforth his main object had been to consolidate it by keeping France isolated, and maintaining intimate or at least friendly relations with all other European Powers in order to cut her off from any alliance which might have encouraged her dreams of a revanche. He cared at the time very little for Turkey; but he cared very much lest the situation created in Turkey by the Russo-Turkish War should lead to a still more serious conflict, in which Germany might have been compelled to take sides with or against Russia. The only Power then bent on ending rather than mending Turkey was Russia, and she was visibly too much exhausted by the effort she had made already to risk another war. Her face, however, had to be saved, and in such circumstances the old diplomacy had its advantages. For not only would Bismarck issue no invitations to the Congress until he had made sure that all the great Powers would accept, but, even before it, the outlines of an agreement between Great Britain and Russia had been quietly embodied in the Salisbury-Schuvaloff memorandum as the result of confidential conversations in London between the British Foreign Secretary and the Russian Ambassador, and, by a similar process in Vienna, Austria-Hungary had

come to terms with Russia on the basis of an Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There were still some moments during the Congress when a certain amount of heat was generated, and Beaconsfield dramatically ordered a special train to be in readiness to take him back to England in event of a rupture; but Bismarck was there to take care that the British Prime Minister should not have occasion to use it. Characteristically, too, of that old order of things only the great Powers sat at the Congress table, and the smaller Powers, Serbia, Roumania, and Greece, though their future was at stake, were only admitted to plead their cause as it were *in forma pauperis*. The whole proceedings lasted exactly a month. The first formal meeting was held on 13th June 1878 and the final Treaty was signed on 13th July. It consisted of only sixty-four articles, all directly cognate to the main issue and for the most part clearly and succinctly drawn. It established the independence of Serbia, Roumania, and Montenegro: it reduced and divided up the big Bulgaria of the Treaty of San Stefano into the principality of Bulgaria north of the Balkans and the autonomous state of Eastern Rumelia south of the Balkans: it restored the continuity of Turkish territory in Europe, and did not sensibly curtail the Sultan's dominions in Asia. The war indemnity to Russia was limited to 300,000,000 gold roubles (about 30 millions sterling). The only clauses which were left dangerously vague were those by which Turkey was bound over to introduce reforms for the benefit of the subject Christian races in Europe and of the Armenians in Asia.

The Treaty of Berlin may not have been an ideal achievement but, as far as it went—our own Cyprus convention secretly concluded with Turkey was a side-show quite outside the Congress—it was a straightforward achievement. It scarcely professed to have any loftier aims than a distribution of territories in accordance with the reputed interests of the Great Powers of Europe, which should prevent the conflagration from spreading, and it bore the signatures of those Powers alone, though it was as Asiatic Powers that Great Britain and Russia chiefly stood in dangerous antagonism to each other. The Berlin Congress was in fact the last great European Congress on the old model of those which had sat in Paris after the Crimean War, and in Vienna after the Napoleonic Wars.

In the forty years which separate the Berlin Congress from the Paris Peace Conference, very different forces came into play that transformed almost beyond recognition the old relationships between the great European Powers long before they actually precipitated the catastrophe of 1914. They were above all new economic forces of which the "old diplomacy" had scarcely yet felt the stress in 1878, though they had been steadily if still slowly changing the face of the world throughout the nineteenth century. Not that the stress of economic forces was in itself anything new in the world's history. It had impelled Western mariners to open up new ocean highways to hitherto unknown continents, when the growth of Ottoman power had closed the old land routes to European trade with the distant Orient. Most of the great wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were largely due to the fierce competition between Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutch, French, and English, for the commercial exploitation of America and the Indies. But we had outstayed all our competitors, and that phase of European rivalry seemed to have been brought to a close when the supremacy of British sea power was assured by the crowning victory of Trafalgar.

In the nineteenth century the great scientific discoveries of steam and electricity heralded another era of economic competition. Under this new impulse industrial production assumed undreamt-of proportions, and quickened the search for new markets both for an increasing output of manufactures and for a larger supply of raw materials, and requiring at the same time a far broader financial basis. This country, itself a storehouse of coal and iron, and already able to draw upon vast and firmly established oversea possessions, was the first to adapt its industrial, commercial, and financial system to new conditions capable of almost unlimited expansion. Its material prosperity grew by leaps and bounds. The pall of smoke which hung over its new manufacturing cities marked the continuous growth of its wealth and of the toiling population that produced it. So great was the lead which England obtained during the earlier part of the nineteenth century, that it seemed for a long time as if foreign countries must remain content to send us the bulk of their raw materials and to buy them back

from us in the shape of British manufactures. It was only after the Berlin Congress that signs began to multiply of an imminent and widespread revolt in other countries, notably in Germany, against our economic supremacy, and as that supremacy was held to be largely due to the favoured "place in the sun" which we had won for ourselves in so many parts of the world, the revolt soon involved a fierce struggle for such "places in the sun" as were still left open to occupation. Henceforth the field to be covered by diplomacy in the daily conduct of international affairs, instead of being confined as it had been mainly since the Napoleonic Wars to the Continent of Europe and the adjoining regions of Asia, extended rapidly to every part of the globe. Diplomacy still had its base in Europe, and it was still chiefly preoccupied with the maintenance of the old European equilibrium. But its outposts stretched to the remotest regions of the earth, and every extension of European power beyond the seas was apt to react upon the delicate equipoise of power in Europe.

A new factor, of which Europe was at first slow to apprehend the significance, was introduced with the emergence of Japan under the pressure of the West from her self-imposed isolation, and her transformation in little more than one generation from a mediæval into a modern State, determined and equipped to resist the economic exploitation to which she had seen China in her ancient decrepitude compelled passively to submit. Russia's great Trans-Siberian railway to the Pacific was never so much an economic enterprise as an instrument of conquest, but it led Russia straight on to a course of aggressive adventure in the Far East which threatened to close a large part of it to the trade of other nations, and to extend the area of Anglo-Russian antagonism right across Asia.

Anglo-German rivalry began in the commercial and industrial field with Bismarck's adoption of a protectionist policy, which ushered in for Germany a wonderful period of economic expansion, accompanied very soon by an insistent demand for an equally vigorous policy of colonial expansion. To the latter Bismarck only yielded reluctantly, for he was still much more concerned with the preservation of Germany's hegemony in Europe, and hoped, as we now know, to draw Great Britain herself into the network o

alliances by which he had laboured to consolidate it. So more than once he told his *Colonial-Menschen* that he was not prepared to quarrel with England over a "little bit of Africa." But when William II. cast the "old pilot" away, the unbridled ambitions of a young and headstrong ruler coincided with the self-confidence of a strenuous people whose heads had been turned by an unprecedently rapid accession of economic prosperity and wealth, and whose imagination jumped with his own along the *via triumphalis* which Germany's sharp sword was to cleave for her to "world-dominion." Turkey was to be her bridgehead in the East, and for twenty years German bankers and merchants and railway and mining engineers, together with German military missions and demonstrative visits from the Kaiser himself, pegged out Germany's claim to the economic control of the Ottoman Empire, culminating in the Bagdad railway, and paved the way for the fateful alliance which brought Turkey into the Great War as a subordinate ally of the Germanic powers. By similar methods, which diplomacy had learnt to call "peaceful penetration," Austria-Hungary co-operated with Germany in all the Balkan States under a combined *Drang nach Osten*, and coming events cast their shadows before, even in the Dual Monarchy's squalid "pig-wars" against Serbia, which were to bend the small Slav Kingdom to its mighty neighbour's will by excluding one of its chief exports from the only accessible markets. All over the Continent tariff wars were becoming a familiar incident of militant diplomacy.

The same economic stress produced the scramble for Africa which opened up the last recesses of the Dark Continent. Had there been no gold mines in the Transvaal there might never have been a South African War, with its far-reaching reactions upon international relations in Europe; and it was the South African War which in turn converted Cecil Rhodes' dream of a Cape to Cairo railway into a practical proposition. As soon as Japan had pricked the huge bubble of China's "latent power" in the war of 1894-1895, Peking became the centre of another economic scramble between the European Powers, in which great loans and railway concessions and spheres of influence and naval bases, acquired under the novel diplomatic formula of "leased territories," played a quite unprecedented part. It was the preface to the

Russo-Japanese War, when Japan realised that something more than another new diplomatic formula—that of the "open door" invented with the best intentions in Washington—was needed to save Korea as well as Northern China from Russian penetration which scarcely professed even to be "peaceful."

Throughout the feverish succession of European crises during the decade before Armageddon, the great financial and industrial interests, nowhere more highly organised than in Germany, were systematically pressed into the service of diplomacy, and sometimes even controlled it. It was through cosmopolitan *haute finance*, itself very powerful at the Quai d'Orsay, that Germany chiefly conducted her campaign of intimidation in Paris during the first Moroccan crisis in 1905; whilst it was the influence of the German financiers and industrialists who, in 1911, after Agadir averted immediate war by telling the Kaiser that Germany was not yet economically ready for it. During the fateful days at the end of July 1914 the same influences, working through their various ramifications in London, did their utmost to frighten British Ministers into standing aside when Germany had decided to invade Belgium and crush France. The war came, and though the world had never before seen such gigantic armies and fleets set in motion or locked in such terrific battle, it proved to be above all a struggle of economic endurance. We were never nearer defeat than when the German submarine campaign against our overseas trade threatened us with starvation, whilst it was the economic stress of the British blockade of Germany that rendered her final overthrow inevitable by crippling her productive forces and sapping the physical strength of her people.

Thus, not only was the Great War the resultant of all the new economic forces which the intensive development of modern finance, industry, and commerce had brought into play, but its issue was ultimately determined by them quite as much as by the operations of the vast armies in the field which depended upon them for their continued maintenance and equipment. It is therefore not surprising that they played an equally dominant part in the protracted negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference after the war was over, or in the violent ferment of unrest which has since then swept over the whole world. When the Peace Conference met in 1919 there were many other

powerful cross currents which had certainly never disturbed the minds of the plenipotentiaries of the Berlin Congress forty years earlier. The price had to be paid for the lavish appeals made to their peoples during the war in the name of freedom and self-determination by the statesmen of the Allied and Associated Powers, and they had also to reckon with the steady growth of the democracy during the four preceding decades, largely due in this country to the extension of the franchise to the bulk of the great working classes who provided the sinews of our economic prosperity. In other countries in which the ruling classes had never made any constitutional response to the claims of the democracy, ancient monarchies were engulfed in the disasters in which the Great War ended for them, and everywhere the long strain of four years' ruinous warfare was engendering a spirit of social jealousy and revolt against all authority which sought to split up civilised society into the two opposing camps of labour and capitalism. Russia was already foundering in a maelstrom of anarchy and communism. All the economic forces, of which the ruthless conflict had done so much to bring about the Great War, had in turn been strained by the war to their last limits, everywhere to the very verge of exhaustion and in some countries already to absolute collapse.

All these were factors unknown to the old diplomacy, with its horizon primarily confined to Europe, and dominated by half a dozen European Powers of theoretically equal status, to whom the smaller nations were little more than pawns. The Paris Peace Conference included not only the five Powers described as the principal Allied and Associated Powers, but twenty-two smaller Powers, of whom some had been active belligerents, others had come into being as a result of the war, and others had confined their co-operation to a rupture of friendly relations with Germany. Amongst the principal Allied and Associated Powers America and Japan sat for the first time in council with great European Powers. For the first time, too, India and the Dominions had their own representatives side by side with those of the United Kingdom who represented the British Empire as a whole. Siam and the new Kingdom of the Hejaz represented other parts of the Eastern world. Half a dozen Central

and South American States each had also their separate representatives. Of the great belligerent nations Russia alone was excluded as for the time being beyond the pale, and Germany and the other enemy States were admitted only to hear and accept the peace terms finally imposed upon them.

Had there been one statesman of transcendant authority to direct the proceedings in this vast and heterogeneous assembly with something of Bismarck's cool masterfulness in 1878 at Berlin, they might have been kept on more practical lines, but there was none. The leadership was concentrated in the hands of the British and French Prime Ministers and the President of the United States, and it was never a thoroughly united leadership. President Wilson enjoyed a unique position both in virtue of his high office and as the representative of the great American Republic, whose final entry into the war virtually determined its issue; but he knew nothing of Europe and, as the event showed, he had not even got the majority of his people behind him. He believed himself to be called upon to create a new heaven and a new earth; the British Prime Minister professed at first to share his belief; M. Clemenceau was by temperament and training a sceptic, but he felt bound to conceal his scepticism.

Whilst the world stood in desperate need of concrete measures to restore some sense of material stability, the Conference spent much of its invaluable time in settling in every detail such ideal schemes as the League of Nations and the Organisation of Labour, of which it might well have been content to secure the acceptance in principle and postpone the elaboration until conditions of actual peace had been evolved. Statesmanship of a more practical order would probably have succeeded in stripping of much that was not immediately essential the two hundred articles of the Treaty of Versailles which reshaped Europe territorially and politically, and imposed upon Germany the forfeiture of her overseas possessions and other acquired rights and interests, together with many complicated military, naval, and air clauses. But those two hundred articles at least dealt with issues which could be regarded as definitely and logically ripe for immediate settlement, and indeed actually settled by the fate of war. Very different were the problems which the Conference undertook to solve in the one hundred and fifty articles

dealing with reparation, war indemnities, and the host of economic readjustments consequent upon territorial redistribution and the creation of entirely new States. Of such problems the Berlin Congress had not had to take cognisance, for they were largely the outcome of that great economic revolution which had complicated and transformed political relationships during the forty years before the Great War, and finally thrown everything into one huge melting pot. We can now clearly see that the Peace Conference had no more realised after the war the extent to which it had exhausted and shattered the economic forces of both victors and vanquished, than the leading European statesmen before the war realised the cataclysm to which those forces had been heading.

But there was some excuse for it. Professors of economics and practical men of business had repeatedly declared before the war that the world would never face the economic strain of a great European war, however reckless some ambitions might be, and when the war was actually upon us, that it could not possibly stand the strain for more than a few months. The relative facility with which hundreds and thousands of millions were produced and poured forth during the four and a half years that the war actually lasted not only falsified all such predictions, but distorted all financial perspective. The demand for the infliction of heavy penalties upon the defeated enemy was not in itself unnatural or unjust, and least of all in France with her devastated territories and large industrial areas systematically ruined by the enemy. In England itself one of the Prime Minister's most popular electioneering catchwords had been to "make Germany pay." Perhaps the weakest point of the "new diplomacy" as compared with the "old" is its reluctance to seek, or rather to take, expert advice from public Departments whose special business it is to provide technical knowledge, and to apply as far as possible to new conditions the accumulated experience of the past. There were plenty of expert commissions attached to the Paris Conference, but singularly little use was made of the vast amount of work which they were there to do and did. With regard to reparations and indemnities, the Conference preferred to juggle with fantastic figures as if some magic in the parchment on which the Peace Treaties were engrossed would restore the huge amount

of the world's wealth that had been destroyed past redemption by the war. Of the multitudinous clauses of the Treaty of Versailles few have proved as illusory as those which loaded the enemy with mountains of new debt, without making any arrangement for the liquidation of the enormous inter-Allied debts which constitute to-day an almost equally formidable obstacle to economic reconstruction.

But it is easy to be wise after the event. If the Paris Peace Conference is to be taken as a criterion of the "new diplomacy," we must admit in mitigation of its partial failures that it had to deal with a cataclysm such as the "old diplomacy" was never called upon to face. The latter would indeed have found its traditional bearings entirely gone if the task of restoring peace to the world had devolved upon its rare survivors. If diplomacy can be defined as the conduct of international affairs between civilised nations, it must necessarily seek to adapt itself to the changing conditions that in successive periods govern them. The "old diplomacy" of the Berlin Congress represented for better or worse the great stable structure that Europe then appeared to be, and its exponents were men familiar with the conditions upon which its stability was believed to rest. That structure had been shattered when upon the "new diplomacy," representing a world in ruins, devolved in Paris as the first step towards its reconstruction the task of putting the pieces together in a series of prodigious Peace Treaties. The immensity of the destruction wrought by the Great War and the multitude of disintegrating forces generated by it had not then been fully measured. It is doubtful whether even to-day they have been, and till they are, little progress can be made towards substantial reconstruction. Statesmanship is everywhere still on its trial, and with it diplomacy, which, whether we call it "old" or "new," is merely one of the instruments of statesmanship.

VALENTINE CHIROL.

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# PART I

## ROBERT ARTHUR TALBOT GASCOYNE CECIL, THIRD MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.

*H.M.'s Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs*—1878-1880; 1885-1886(Jan.); 1887(Jan.)-1892; 1895-1900

*Prime Minister*—1885-1886(Jan.); 1886(July)-1892; 1895-1900; 1900-1902

# CHAPTER I

## FROM HATFIELD TO CONSTANTINOPLE

"Le temps respecte peu ce que l'on fait sans lui."

### 1.

Any typical Englishman is a potential statesman, for he has a sense of time and growth. He knows that nature has ordained that nothing long endures that has been made without time as ally; and that only a regard for this natural law can make statecraft successfully constructive. Great events, after all, are culminations, effects of causes which, some immediate and some remote, are only revealed in the study of history. The influence which the past exercises over the present must have early impressed itself upon the mind of Robert Cecil, afterwards Lord Salisbury, who was brought up, at Hatfield, almost literally in the company of his ancestors. History speaks from every wall of Hatfield House. Side by side with those of earlier Cecils, portraits of European monarchs and foreign ambassadors challenge the instruction of the beholder and send his thoughts roaming through the story of other lands as well as of his own. Only to know Hatfield is an education. King Edward VI. lived in the Old Palace, as the remnant of the original building is still named; in the garden which lies between it and the present house there still stand, propped by succouring posts, the mulberry trees which were planted by the hands of James I.; and here it was that Princess Elizabeth consoled her captive years biding the hour which should call her to rule the British people. When that hour came she summoned to

direct her councils William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, tenth in direct ascent to Robert Cecil, third Marquis of Salisbury. And as the story of Burleigh's life was the history of England at one of her greatest periods, so the future Lord Salisbury was destined to be another famous queen's trusted counsellor, and to symbolise England to the outer world during the final years of a hardly less glorious age.

Lord Salisbury may be said to have been himself a culmination—the culmination of an English type. In a recent book upon the Prime Ministers of Britain, Col. Clive Bigham deduces a composite portrait based on the biographical facts of the thirty-six individuals who have held that post.[1] It shows our typical Prime Minister as one born the heir to a peerage, brought up in the country, educated at Eton and Oxford. Elected to the House of Commons at twenty-five, and married four years later, he comes into office at thirty-two. At forty-eight he enters the House of Lords, and at fifty becomes the leader of a Government. Relinquishing the post of Prime Minister at about sixty, he dies at seventy, leaving a family. Lord Salisbury followed this course with remarkable closeness. He was born in the ranks of an aristocracy at the zenith of its vigour, brought up at Hatfield, educated at Eton and Christ Church. He entered Parliament without opposition at the age of twenty-three, and remained a member of it until the day of his death. He married when he was twenty-seven; but he started his official career a little later than the average, since he did not hold ministerial rank till nine years afterwards, and he did not become the head of a Government until his fifty-sixth year. On the other hand, he held the premiership for an exceptionally long period; and died when he was seventy-three, leaving a numerous family. What part heredity contributed to his composition is a question for students of human physiology; in an interesting passage[2] the biographer of Charles James Fox traces "the black hair and swarthy features" of his hero back to Charles II., whose grandson's grandson he was.

They also resembled each other, he records, "in gay and facile temper; in their easy and expansive converse with their fellow-men as well as less laudable traits." Whether by some freak of atavism Lord Salisbury may have owed his own dark complexion and vivid intellect to the Welshman, Davy Cyssell, the founder of his family, who crossed the English border with Henry VII., must be left to conjecture; certain it is that his ancestry and his upbringing combined to produce in him a great Conservative Englishman, typical in most respects, but endowed with an unusually keen and powerful intellect. He possessed a very rare talent for cultured invective. He was John Bull articulate—a combative Conservative: he inherited the best that the accumulated efforts of past Englishmen supplied; and he regarded his inheritance as a trust. His leisure he devoted to studying the difficult art of government, and he early developed a passion for foreign politics. He was born in a class which habitually thought of the interests of the State as identical with their own; and the very strength of his belief in the vocation of a governing class[3] made him sternly devote his services to his country. His country had given him all; he would return the talents committed to him augmented by the contribution of a life's hard work. He afforded an example of how a single individual may aspire to benefit the race, and continued the process whereby posterity reaps the reward of accumulated effort.

The environment of Hatfield, with its memorials of famous British and foreign men of State, made him think of England as a whole, and England as one nation among many; England with a part to play in the world. His mind thus turned naturally to foreign affairs, and when later he rose to the highest position in the State he chose to be his own Foreign Minister. The qualifications which he obviously possessed for the post were limited, in the eyes of many, by a certain unresponsiveness to public opinion. He never seemed to care whether his speeches interested the audience or

not. It is related of him that on one occasion, when he was making a speech at Oxford, a reference to "the English" evoked an interruption from a hearer who obviously belonged to the other side of the Tweed. "British," corrected the interrupting voice. Lord Salisbury took not the slightest notice, and said "English" again. "What aboot the Scots," bawled the Scotsman; and he was supported by others. Lord Salisbury went on with his speech, and said "English" again. After two or three vain attempts to make him use the word "British" the interrupters relapsed into unsatisfied silence. The orator was indeed more at home in the House of Lords. But, undemocratic though he was, he had less need of contact with the crowd than most politicians, for he felt instinctively with the mass of his countrymen; he represented the immanent in the British character. He was a great individualist who had collective opinion behind him. He illustrated the truth of Emerson's remark that "everyone of these island inhabitants is an island." It seemed natural to him to lead his country; he began in a position to which others laboriously climb. To some the possession of Hatfield might have been a lure to luxury, an excuse for a life of pastime or of cultured idleness. To Salisbury it was a stimulus to disinterested service. Hatfield was a happy alternative to office. His private laboratory, indeed, was more attractive to him than Downing Street, and only duty could call him away from it. He was never subjected to the temptation of subordinating policy to the need of securing stray votes of parliamentary waverers, and to fall from power was to hand over a heavy burden to another, and enjoy at ease the companionship of a family to whom he was devotedly attached.

## 2.

Not that in his early days he entirely escaped a struggle with adversity. His father disapproved of his marriage, and left him with an income inadequate to

provide for the needs of a growing family; and he was driven to earn a difficult livelihood with his pen. He therefore contributed to the *Quarterly Review* a number of essays, which deserve a closer study than has been accorded to them by his biographer. They are the key to his subsequent greatness. They disclose his methods, they announce his principles, they forecast his career. Two of his best articles are those on Pitt and Castlereagh, upon whom he modelled himself, and whose offices he was to combine in his own person. One sees clearly in his writings his practice of deeply studying any question with which he was confronted, taking the side which on the whole he held to be superior, vigorously championing it, demolishing the arguments of his opponents, and not caring to show by any semblance of sympathy how well he understood their point of view. He could examine any question in the light of dispassionate reason, but having once plunged into action he applied himself wholly to achieving success in the course which he had adopted. This attitude of mind occasionally gives rise to flaws in his argumentation; at least it never leaves any ambiguity, either for friends or opponents, as to his intentions. He was always master of his subject, in writing and in action, and the British public learned to trust him to study every detail of a question, however intricate, which came within the province of foreign affairs, and then, without personal ambition, to choose the best line of action. In his later years the public had a wonderfully implicit confidence in his judgment. His own peculiar trust in the British people is shown in a passage in the essay on Pitt which deserves to become classic. He is writing of the factiousness of Pitt's opponents, who had made a sport of national interests. "They (the British public) had borne it long, seemingly acquiescent, as is the English custom, while faction wrestled with faction, and clique with clique, for the division of the rich spoil which then was the reward of power. The factions mistook the meaning of this apathy, and construed it as consent. They would not recognise the

gradual accumulation of silent disgust which their acts were causing in the public mind. . . . There is no blindness so unaccountable as the blindness of English statesmen to the political value of a character. Living only in and for the House of Commons, moving in an atmosphere of constant intrigue, accustomed to look upon professions as only baits of more or less attractiveness, they acquire a very peculiar code of ethics, and they are liable wholly to lose sight of the fact that there is a stiffer and less corrupted morality out of doors."

"The politician cannot bring himself to believe that party strategy and personal competition, which are everything to his mind, are trifles too slight to think about in the eyes of the nation he serves. . . . And thus we have the spectacle, even in later days, of party leaders of considerable intellect, laboriously and carefully ruining themselves in the esteem of a nation. . . . They have failed because they have been blind to the elementary truth, that a character for unselfish honesty is the only secure passport to the confidence of the English people." Lord Salisbury was himself to perform the difficult feat of being a good Party man, and yet directing foreign policy to the satisfaction of the nation as a whole. The secret of his success was, that he was known to put principle before Party, and counted it dearer than office. In 1867 he retired from the India Office, his first important post, to which he had only been appointed one year before, because he disagreed with his Prime Minister on a subject entirely unconnected with his own Department. He gained the confidence of the British public at the only price at which its unreserved trust can be purchased, the sacrifice of his own immediate interests.

Time after time in these essays we see his own future policy foreshadowed, in its strength and in its weakness. He lacked sympathy with popular movements. The sternly practical nature which he extolled in Castlereagh, the scorn with which he denounced those who fail to distinguish between attainable and visionary aims, led him greatly to underestimate

the importance of such impalpable forces as race nationalism. He wrote that the hearts of the Poles were already "parcelled out"; and that an independent Poland was a "mere chimera."[4] He derided the "artificial and premature freedom" which was conferred upon Greece by the battle of Navarino, 1827, and referred to the idea of Italian unity as a "student's dream if there had been no misgovernment to warm it into life." He rejoiced particularly that enthusiasm was an ingredient which had been omitted from Lord Castlereagh's character, and that therefore his hero had no sympathy for "causes." His cynicism appears in the exclamation that the only bond of union which endures between two countries is the absence of all clashing interests. He had a hatred of all cant and make-believe; and a doctrine that repeatedly influenced his own policy is expressed in the phrase that "willingness on good cause to go to war is the best possible security for peace."[5]

He reserved his most effective sarcasm and most devastating criticism for the policy of Lord Russell in regard to Poland and to Denmark during the crises of the years 1863 and 1864; and the impression which our pusillanimous conduct then made upon his mind remained a warning to him all his life. In her quarrel with Prussia over the succession to the Schleswig-Holstein Duchies, Denmark looked to Britain for support, and had been deliberately encouraged by implied promises of active English aid. On 31st December 1863 Rendsburg, the capital of Holstein, was evacuated by the Danes acting on British advice. Yet, when Prussia showed that she was determined to seize the disputed provinces, Britain did nothing. There is a prophetic note in Lord Salisbury's bitter indignation. "If, by (Britain's) timid language and a false love of peace, Germany is encouraged to believe that she can set treaties at defiance with impunity, a Continental war will result, in which it is almost impossible that England should not be forced to take a part." "The policy of honour,"

he exclaims, "is also the policy of peace"[6]—which might be taken as the official motto for British Foreign Secretaries. He foresaw a German Fleet—then non-existent—riding in the Danish harbour of Kiel; and when Alsace-Lorraine was torn from France in 1871, he implored the Liberal Government of the day at least to make a protest. Even if British advice were not listened to—and he realised that it would not be by triumphant Germany—"rebuffs suffered in such a cause would not be dishonourable; they would at least save us from any moral complicity with acts which we abhor, and from the danger of being estopped by a seeming acquiescence at this time from the chances of action which future contingencies might offer." He argued that a ceded territory would be a constant memorial of humiliation, and foretold that "a time must come when their (the Germans') ambitious dreams will cross the path of some Power strong enough to resent them: and that day will be to France the day of restitution and revenge."[7] Thus often is the student of the past the best seer of the future.

The encouragement given to Poland's and Denmark's aspirations, and their subsequent abandonment, seared itself deep upon his patriot mind, and made him throughout his career very cautious—overcautious some have thought—about giving any sort of pledge to foreign countries. "In our foreign policy," he said in a speech at Stamford in 1865, "what we have to do is simply to perform our own part with honour, to abstain from a meddling diplomacy, to uphold England's honour steadily and fearlessly, and always to be rather prone to let action go along with words rather than to let it lag behind them."

## 3.

He carried his precepts into practice, and before he retired from political life he had done much to efface the ancient charge of perfidy which recent events had

once more brought to the lips of foreign critics in connection with Britain's foreign policy. Frenchmen had felt keener sympathy than Britain for the Polish insurrection in 1863, and their delight had therefore been considerable when they found that Lord Russell, in one despatch after another (and notably in that of 17th June 1863), championed the cause of Polish independence against Russia. The alliance of the Western Powers, hallowed on the battlefields of the Crimea nine years before, appeared about to be renewed. Britain was under no treaty obligation to support Polish claims; but she seemed anxious to do so. When, however, Russia remained unrepentant before British rebukes Lord Russell's ardour for Poland cooled; and the wretched insurgents were left to be dealt with by the swords and the knouts of the Cossacks. The disillusionment in France was profound; and when we, in the following year, repeatedly assured Denmark of our solicitude for her integrity and independence, loaded her with advice, which even when uncongenial she was led to accept by the hope of our support, and then abandoned her to the mailed fist of Prussia, the disgust of our former ally, Germany's rival for influence in Western Europe, was unbounded and openly expressed. She had acted with us, as Lord Salisbury wrote, in the expectation that some practical result would issue from our brave words. She did not find out her delusion till it was too late to withdraw from collaboration; and when she shared our ignominy she bitterly recalled the cry of "Perfide Albion." Was it not Britain's way to use an alliance just so long as it was useful and then to scuttle? It was unfortunately most true that at the end of Marlborough's wars, in 1712 and 1713, we abandoned Austria and the Dutch, when both were eager to continue the struggle against France, after having secured our own purpose in fighting, and having acquired Gibraltar and Minorca. In the next great Continental war Britain had deserted Frederick of Prussia and left him to face a European coalition as best he might, as soon as we had succeeded

in thrusting France from most of her oversea possessions. The two-party system, responding to a pendulum of opinion which swung in foreign as well as domestic affairs, inspired a pretty general mistrust of British foreign policy. We had been allied to most of the Continental nations in turn; and the enemy of yesterday had been the ally of to-day. "England," said Bismarck on a later occasion, "is one of those dexterous Powers with whom it is not only impossible to form any lasting alliance but who cannot be relied upon with any certainty, because in England the basis of all political relations is more changeable than in any other State; it is the product of elections and the resulting majorities."[8] There was incontestable justice in this criticism; and to have contributed to lift Foreign Affairs from the partisanship of Party Politics was to be not the least of Salisbury's services to Britain.

4.

The brief and bitter experience of office in 1867-68, to which allusion has already been made, was followed, after an interval of six years, by an invitation to occupy the same position in Lord Beaconsfield's Administration (1874). Other events than those of India, however, were soon to attract the interest of one whose mind was habitually focussed upon Europe. The situation in European Turkey, which then extended to the borders of Austria, became very grave in 1875. The complex problem of Ottoman rule over Christian races claimed the attention of the Cabinet to the exclusion of almost everything else; and Lord Salisbury was called upon to play a part in its solution.

For the last three centuries Turkish misrule had lain like a blight over South-Eastern Europe, arresting political growth. Administration had become a system of moral and pecuniary corruption. All the civil, judicial, and ecclesiastical posts were bought and sold, and the purchase money ultimately recouped from the unhappy natives. Extortion took the place of taxation.

Exemption was purchasable by those whose fortunes sufficed for bribery. Christian subjects who consented to place their services unreservedly at the disposal of their masters escaped taxation and feudal burdens; they were armed, and expected to obtain their remuneration by looting their co-religionists. Thus treachery and venality were both encouraged. No rayah might return an insult whether inflicted upon himself or his family. He was not armed — unless he had sold himself—and could be summarily slain if he attempted to defend himself against degradation or rapacity.

In the earliest period of Ottoman rule in Europe, the rayahs had indeed been as well off as the peasants in neighbouring countries, in Hungary, in Austria, and in Russia. But the political progress which had bettered the lot of Christian countries had not been extended to their co-religionists under Turkish dominion; from the year that Selim the Sot succeeded Solyman the Magnificent at Constantinople, Turkish rule progressively deteriorated. The contrast between the provinces liberated from Turkey and those still under her thrall became very obvious.[9] After the great French revolution the breath of nationality began to stir even in the Balkans. Greece won her freedom with the help of Britain and France. Serbia, helped by Russia, obtained virtual independence; Roumania threw off some of the shackles of Turkish misrule. Then, in 1875, an outbreak occurred in the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, adjacent to Hungary and Austria; and the Austrian Government intervened at the Porte on their behalf. Next year (1876) the Bulgarians followed their example, and later Serbia and Montenegro declared war against Turkey.

The attention of the general public was suddenly and violently attracted to these disturbances by the ferocity with which the Turks suppressed the rising in Bulgaria. The first news was received by a London newspaper, the *Daily News*, from its Constantinople correspondent, who had learnt it from a vice-consular report which was never delivered to the British

Ambassador at the Porte.[10] Formidable bands of irregulars, known as Bashi-bazouks, had, it appeared, descended upon the miserable insurgents, armed chiefly with agricultural implements, and had simply destroyed them. Villagers who had previously given those evidences of wealth so well known to Turkish officials were subjected to tortures before being put to death, in the hope that they would reveal caches of treasure, which they probably did not possess. Some were slowly roasted, others had ears, nose, feet, and hands cut off.[11] In vain some hundreds of luckless fugitives barricaded themselves inside a church at Batak. The emblems of Christianity only roused the Asiatics to still more fanatical blood-lust. They tore tiles off the roof, and flung in petroleum-soaked rags which set alight some, and caused others of the refugees to bolt, only to be struck down by the yataghans of the watchers outside. The miseries of other victims were more prolonged, and for all the only end was death, except for the younger women who were carried away with the loot.

The British public had not yet become inured to horrors. It had not then witnessed the cataclysm of a world-war, nor watched the gradual disintegration, by famine and disease, of a whole European nation; and it was roused to a fever pitch of indignation by these "Bulgarian Atrocities." Mr Gladstone, at the age of sixty-seven, was torn from the "old books, old friends, and old trees," whose company he had sought in the previous year; at monster meetings, in Parliament, by letter and by word, with an energy that would have done credit to a revivalist preacher in the prime of life, he set England aflame. In a pamphlet entitled "Bulgarian Horrors" he advocated the expulsion of the Turks "bag and baggage"[12] from Europe. "This thorough riddance, this most blessed deliverance," he wrote, "is the only reparation we can make to the memory of those heaps and heaps of dead; to the violated purity alike of matron, of maiden, and of child; to the civilisation which has been affronted and

ashamed; to the laws of God, or if you like, of Allah; to the moral sense of mankind at large." To the impassioned denunciation of a crusader he appended the counsel of a Party leader. He urged the Prime Minister, Lord Beaconsfield, to break away from the traditional policy of Britain, and to cast in her lot unreservedly with the afflicted Christian peoples.

This advice did not commend itself to his great rival. Lord Beaconsfield, full of his dream of Imperial India, and anxious above everything for the safety of our route to the East, decided still to befriend the Turk. The Turkish Empire was for Britain a bulwark against Russia in the Balkans, and in Asia Minor. Russia was our enemy there and in Afghanistan. He deprecated taking action on account of events which were common in Eastern Europe. Massacres should not deflect him from his considered policy. He was inclined to belittle them, and flippantly referred to some reported outrages as "bazaar gossip." He based his insensibility to the Christians' sufferings on the reports of his Ambassador in Constantinople, who, in one unfortunate phrase, dismissed as "coffee-house babble" accounts of atrocities which were soon afterwards proved to be accurate.

His levity shocked England. The public endorsed Mr Gladstone's indignation; and not Britain alone, but all Europe was roused. Russia and Austria, supported by Germany, drew up a memorandum for compelling the Porte to carry out reforms. Beaconsfield refused to be a party to the scheme. Lord Derby, however, then Foreign Secretary, demanded of the Porte that it should punish the chief perpetrators of the crimes against the Bulgarians (21st September 1876). He also arranged with Russia and the other Great Powers—Austria, Germany, France, and Italy —that a Conference should be held by them in Constantinople to devise administrative changes for the better protection of the Christian races of Turkey.

Lord Salisbury was chosen to be Britain's representative. He left England on 20th November 1876,

and made a circuitous journey via Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Rome. This tour of consultation was deprecated by the Foreign Office, but was insisted upon by Lord Beaconsfield. "You must remember," the Prime Minister wrote to his envoy, before he started, "we suffer from a feeble and formal diplomacy, and that there has been little real interchange of thought between the English Government and foreign Powers."[13] He had long conversations with the Foreign Ministers of France and Italy, and with Prince Bismarck at Berlin, and Count Andrassy, the most powerful man in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He found a consensus of anti-Turkish sentiments. "The journey" (such are the words of his biographer) "must be regarded as a notable step in Lord Salisbury's progress from an amateur's interest in foreign affairs to an expert's knowledge of them." Hitherto he had scrutinised the world's affairs from Hatfield; he was about to plunge into the maelstrom of Balkan politics, to visit the "Sick Man's" dominions that he knew well by repute; and to confront without local knowledge the most artful diplomatist of Europe in a capital so notorious for intrigue that even honest men there learn to approach their goal by crooked by-paths.

# CHAPTER II

## CONSTANTINOPLE CONFERENCE, 1876. SAN STEFANO AND BERLIN CONGRESS, 1878

"L'Humanité a l'Histoire comme l'individu a la mémoire."
H. HANOTAUX.

### 1.

LORD SALISBURY was greeted on arrival by Sir Henry Elliot, British Ambassador to the Porte, who was to be his second at the Conference. The two men were temperamentally uncongenial; they belonged to different generations and to different schools. Lord Salisbury was ardent and unconventional, still politically youthful. Sir Henry was a formal diplomatic veteran who had been in Constantinople since 1867. He knew the Turkish Empire well, and was now ordered to take his lead from one to whom the practice of diplomacy and contact with the oriental mind were new experiences. Elliot, a convinced Turcophil, was very popular with the British colony of Pera,[1] and had its cordial support in his duel with the Russian Ambassador Ignatieff, which had long been his chief pre-occupation in Constantinople.

By an unfortunate freak of temperament Lord Salisbury's intellectual exuberance seemed to find its congenial counterpart in the clever talk of the animated Russian. It was soon noticed, and adversely commented upon by the British residents, that he and General Ignatieff enjoyed each other's company very much. They were seen walking arm in arm down Pera's tortuous main street. Before long they were frequently closeted together in Ignatieff's study, and

from these political discussions Elliot was excluded. To the mortification of the British Ambassador it became perfectly clear that Lord Salisbury was going to base his policy on trustful co-operation with his Russian rival.

Sir Henry Elliot had primed his colleague apparently in vain. He had told him that Ignatieff was known as the most talented liar on the Bosphorus—a pre-eminence which had not easily been won. He explained that the Austrian and German Ambassadors were both his cat's-paws, and told a story how Count Zichy, the Austrian, passing with him one day under the walls of the Embassy, exclaimed, "Oh! that fiend of a man!"—and next day followed the fiend's advice as docilely as ever.[2]

Lord Salisbury was inclined to read the bitterness of a rival into Elliot's judgments. He went, however, willingly enough with him to an audience with the Sultan which the Ambassador arranged for him, and had an opportunity of forming his own opinion as to the "gentleman of exquisite manners" who was "as mean a villain as could be found in the purlieus of his capital."[3] Abdul Hamid had succeeded to the throne a few months before, his predecessor having gone out of his mind under the stress of his Grand Vizier's reforming zeal. The efforts of Midhat Pasha to introduce a constitution for the Turkish Empire had already indirectly brought about the deposition and suicide of one Sultan and had driven another to insanity. Abdul Hamid preserved his wits. When the reform scheme was laid before him he was politic enough to accept it in principle, but obstinately resisted one of its clauses. He positively refused to sign away his right to exile any of his subjects at will. Having carried his point, he allowed the constitution to be promulgated. In the following year (1877) he found an opportunity of exercising the prerogative he had so jealously guarded, and Midhat Pasha, the troublesome reformer, was banished to Arabia and there strangled, a few years later, at the Sultan's bidding.

Ever since the days of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe Britain had enjoyed an exceptional position at the Porte. Lord Stratford, during twenty-five years' residence at the Porte, had acquired an influence greater than that of any previous ambassador, and had actually directed Turkish affairs with greater authority than any of the Sultan's own Ministers. The Crimean War had shown him and his country to be Turkey's true friend; and his policy had apparently become traditional for Britain. British ambassadors, therefore, occupied a special position, and Sir Henry Elliot was consulted by the Government on many purely internal matters. Lord Salisbury was therefore received very cordially by Abdul Hamid. The Sultan expressed an earnest desire to be guided by Lord Salisbury's advice; if he would let him know the concessions which Her Majesty's Government thought should be made to Russia, and the reforms which should be introduced, he (the Sultan) would go as far as was compatible with his independence and the interests of his empire. The British envoy replied that he must first have some communication with his colleagues; but that in a few days he would be in a position to speak more plainly. The Sultan, therefore, who seemed much delighted with the bearing of his distinguished guest, courteously invited him to let him know as soon as he had had the communications from his colleagues, and to come with the British Ambassador to dine with him on the day on which he was ready with his information.

The Sultans of Turkey do not often ask strangers to dine with them, or allow them to name their own date; still more rarely has it happened that such an invitation has been spurned. Lord Salisbury never dined at the Yildiz Kiosque. Messenger after messenger came to the British Embassy to enquire when His Majesty might expect him, and was turned away with an evasive reply or none at all.[4]

2.

For Ignatieff's advice in response to Lord Salisbury's communication had been unambiguous. He must be Turkey's friend or Russia's; both he could not be. Loyal co-operation was the only possible method if the will of Europe was to be imposed on Abdul Hamid. This opinion fitted well with Lord Salisbury's categorical temper. He forewent the delights of the autocratic dinner-table; and when the first official meeting of the Conference was held at the Russian Embassy, General Ignatieff was able to announce that he would lay before it resolutions which had been drawn up by the British first Plenipotentiary and himself. They were based, he explained, on the principle of endeavouring "to pretend to maintain the fiction of the Turkish Government's independence."[5]

Lord Salisbury was hardly justified in subscribing to such a principle. By the terms in which the Conference had been convened the independence of Turkey had to be maintained; and to brand that independence as a fiction was to stray some way from his instructions. As the meetings proceeded the position of the British Ambassador, acting as second delegate, became more and more difficult. With his ten years' experience of the country he believed he could gauge the situation better than his chief. The reforms which were being discussed were concerned chiefly with the grant of local administrative autonomy, under the control of European Commissions. In the Ottoman administration the functions deriving from various offices by no means corresponded to the titles attached to them; the duties prescribed in Constantinople were very different from the duties performed in Macedonia. The details and contrarieties of Turkish rule could not be mastered in a few days. The very names which constantly recurred — mutessarif, zaptieh, vilayet, vali, muderlik, nahieh, and the rest — familiar enough to General Ignatieff and to Sir Henry Elliot, conveyed

nothing to Lord Salisbury without an explanation and an exertion. Moreover, on the cardinal point of our general policy, the junior delegate differed absolutely from his chief. Elliot advocated only as much collaboration with Russia as was absolutely necessary to avoid a rupture, and held that it would be most impolitic to press upon Turkey any reforms which she might be counted upon to reject. To urge inacceptable demands was, he believed, the actual purpose of Russian diplomacy, for it would result in war; and the war would then be passed by Europe as justifiable. He did not share Ignatieff's opinion that the Porte would accept anything unanimously insisted upon by the Powers. Yet he was expected to subscribe to a policy of unswerving support of Russia. He was, in addition, seldom consulted by his chief; and only at the sittings themselves did he learn details of the policy which he was expected to second. His predicament became daily more embarrassing: he had to choose between his convictions and loyalty to his leader. On 17th December he composed a long despatch to the Foreign Office, in which he set forth his own views on the situation. He showed the draft to Lord Salisbury, who begged him to suppress it: such a demonstration of divided policy, said Lord Salisbury, would damage his authority, and British interests must suffer.[6]

Yet a fortnight later (29th December) Lord Salisbury recommended to the Government that they should recall Sir Henry Elliot. He believed that it might then be made to appear a protest against Turkish recalcitrance. Unluckily for his request, General Ignatieff, with the over-cleverness of an inveterate intriguer, had contrived to convey the same recommendation to the British Government; and what Beaconsfield might have accorded to his envoy he refused to grant at the bidding of a foreigner.[7]

3.

This sharp division of opinion at Constantinople in truth reflected the views of the British Government. The Cabinet was divided between abhorrence of Turkey's behaviour and fear of Russian designs. Salisbury's views were not those of his own Prime Minister. And since he had left London a change had come over public opinion. The fervour for oppressed Christians created by Mr Gladstone's passionate oratory was cooling. Fuller accounts from the Balkans showed that the Turks had not acted savagely without some provocation, and that the brutalities had by no means been confined to one side. Turks who fell into the hands of Serbs or Bosniaks fared no better than Christians at the mercy of Turks. Montenegro, it was rumoured, counted the prowess of her warriors by the number of Turkish noses they collected; a nose with a piece of hirsute upper-lip attached counting for most as being that of a male opponent. A young doctor had been flayed alive, and his companion had had his limbs chopped off one by one by Christians; the victims themselves were Christians, and their offence had only been that of refusing to join the insurrection. The public was somewhat bewildered, and partisans of Turkey were fortified. Lord Beaconsfield was quick to strike on the iron of popular opinion while it was still malleable; and he gave it a sharp pro-Turk bent by emphasising the danger to Britain of increased Russian influence at Constantinople. He boldly denounced Russia in his speeches, and sometimes alluded to her almost as an enemy who had already declared war on Britain.

It was not surprising, then, that the Conference in Constantinople came to nothing. Lord Salisbury secured the unwilling support of his subordinate, but their unanimity was judged to be more apparent than real, and the Russian representative's design to prevent the introduction of an international reform scheme was

favoured by the known dissensions of the London Cabinet. When the proposals of the Powers were finally presented to the Porte they were summarily rejected. Some of the more drastic conditions of control were deleted, and at the last moment the good offices of the Turcophil British Ambassador were sought, and Sir Henry Elliot was begged by Lord Salisbury to mediate with his friend, the Grand Vizier. Until that moment the Turkish Government had not been consulted. The Conference meetings had been held in the Russian Embassy, the home of their arch-enemy. The demands had been put before them only to accept or reject. In answer to Sir Henry Elliot's more conciliatory overtures the Porte requested time to negotiate upon two points of the proposed reforms—nomination of the Governor-General and powers of the international Commission of Control. But the Conference was afraid of prevarication, and insisted upon unconditional acceptance of the terms as modified. General Ignatieff declared that he felt sure that "all the Christian representatives would consider themselves bound in honour to impose the irreducible minimum upon the Turks."[8] It was not the first time, nor will it be the last, that a subtle foreign mind has played upon an Englishman's sense of honour, and used it for his own purpose. At the final meeting, at which Turkish delegates were present, Lord Salisbury in person solemnly warned the Porte that the British Government was resolved not to give its sanction either to "maladministration or oppression," and that if the Porte from obstinacy or inactivity offered resistance to the efforts then being made to place the Ottoman Empire on a more sure basis, responsibility for the consequences would rest solely with the Sultan and his advisers.[9]

The threat was vain, and the Conference broke up. Its failure was attributed by Lord Salisbury himself to a growing impression in Constantinople that Russia was not so strong as she appeared, and that the British Government was not so much in earnest as its principal

delegate. It is interesting to note as a third reason mentioned by Lord Salisbury, "various indications of German activity in wrecking the Conference,"[10] — a policy only too compatible with the wishes of Ignatieff.

To mark the displeasure of the Great Powers it was decided that all the plenipotentiaries should be withdrawn on the same day. January 22nd was chosen. On that day a terrific storm was raging in the Bosphorus, and the unfortunate diplomatists had to choose between a demonstration and probable sea-sickness, or giving the Porte absolution and spending the night on land. Lord Salisbury, mindful, perhaps, of the Napoleonic maxim of controlling incident by policy, not policy by incident, adhered to his resolve. He spent a miserable night while his ship vainly strove to put out to sea. But the other ambassadors remained abed, and the demonstration evaporated in their dreams.

The primary cause of Turkey's resistance was undoubtedly a belief that Britain was still her friend. British support had been continued regularly since the Crimean War, notably in 1875, when a minatory declaration, known as the Andrassy Note, had actually only been subscribed to by the British Foreign Office at the request of the Porte itself.[11] British aid was regarded as a force which had sometimes to operate in secret, but which could always be counted upon.

To this belief a false step by Lord Derby, the British Foreign Secretary, had notably contributed. On 22nd December he had telegraphed to Lord Salisbury that the British Government would not consent to, or assist in, coercive measures against the Porte. He added that in the event of war Turkey, on the other hand, was to expect no assistance from Britain. The first half of this information was hardly, we should suppose, intended for communication to the Porte. Yet Lord Derby, receiving a visit from the Turkish Ambassador, Musurus Pasha, that same afternoon, imparted to him the gist of his whole telegram. The delighted Ambassador communicated forthwith to his

Government the welcome news that the British Cabinet would not coerce the Porte for the sake of reforms. The Grand Vizier, it may be imagined, was as pleased at the news as his Ambassador; and the latter was instructed to explain to his Lordship, with great gratitude, that the Sublime Porte "reckoned more than ever on the kind support" of the British Government. Lord Derby received a quite special testimonial from the Turkish Foreign Ministry:— "The great wisdom and spirit and justice which distinguish the eminent Minister who directs with such loyalty the foreign relations of England form a sure guarantee to us that he will kindly give us a new proof of his kindness and valued friendship." Lord Salisbury in Constantinople was afterwards mystified to discover that in spite of his pro-Russian attitude the Grand Vizier seemed to rely implicitly on the assistance of the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. He telegraphed in this sense to London, and Lord Derby made some attempt to remove the impression he had created. But the mischief was done; and to the end of the proceedings Turkey believed that she could count on British support.[12]

In the following April (1877) further proof of its existence seemed to be given when Mr (afterwards Sir Henry) Layard was sent as British Ambassador. Sir Henry Elliot was removed *pro forma* on the breakdown of the Conference in January, and was succeeded, only three months later, by a yet more devoted Turcophil.[13] The Ottoman belief, as we shall see, was not ill-founded.

## 4.

War between Russia and Turkey broke out on 24th April 1877. By arrangement with Roumania Russian armies crossed the Danube on 27th June. Another force invaded Asia Minor. A magnificent defence was put up at Plevna, in Bulgaria, by

Osman Pasha, who, entrenched behind rude earthworks, repulsed the Russians time after time with great slaughter. But on 10th December the redoubt was stormed by Russian and Roumanian troops acting together. The Russian armies swept forward, through the snow-clad Balkan hills into Adrianople, and thence southward to within sight of the Sea of Marmara, almost of the minarets of Stamboul itself.

Europe took fright. Turkey appealed to the Powers on 3rd January 1878. She appealed with special earnestness to Britain.

British diplomacy had not waited for her appeal. On 13th December of the previous year Lord Derby had reminded the Russian Government of a promise previously given that she did not intend to acquire Constantinople. Now, on 13th January, the British Foreign Minister specified the occupation of the Dardanelles as an event that would endanger the good relations of England and Russia. Three days later the British Ambassador in St Petersburg, Lord Augustus Loftus, was charged to warn the Tsar that any Treaty made separately between Russia and Turkey, which affected the international treaties signed in 1856 and 1871, would not be valid without the consent of all the signatory Powers. On 23rd January the British Mediterranean squadron was ordered to move towards Constantinople, and anchored in Besika Bay, outside the Dardanelles on the Asiatic coast. On 28th January the Ministry asked for an additional credit for military purposes of £6,000,000. On 7th February part of the fleet entered the Sea of Marmara. Thence British sailors could spy the Russian soldiers camped upon its shores. The whale and the elephant, to use Bismarck's phrase, glared defiantly at one another; but fortunately found it difficult to strike.

Some of these measures had been regarded with misgiving by the public; but on the whole they probably responded to the political sentiment of the country. They certainly appealed to the populace of London, which was loud in its defiance of Russia. That nation

was not now regarded as the champion of oppressed Christian peoples, but as an acquisitive monster endangering Britain's position in the East. A music-hall ditty containing the refrain—

> "We don't want to fight, but, by jingo, if we do,
> We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too!"

became the song of the moment, and incidentally gave a new nickname to hot-headed patriots. To them the Russian victory seemed a British defeat. Early in March the country learned the terms which, on the 3rd of that month, the Grand Duke Nicholas and his triumphant generals had dictated to prostrate Turkey at San Stefano—at San Stefano which, with the help of maps, was found to be a village not twenty miles from Constantinople. According to these terms the Balkan protégés of Russia were all to be aggrandised at the expense of the Porte. Roumania, Serbia, and Montenegro were to obtain complete independence with a slight extension of territory: Russia was to keep the conquests she had made in Asia, Batoum, Kars, Ardahar, and Bayazid, and was to receive a war indemnity of over 300 millions roubles: Turkey on her side undertook to grant reforms to the Armenians, and to protect them from Kurds, Circassians, and other oppressors: reforms were also foreshadowed for what remained of Turkey in Europe: but little would remain; for the principal clause of the agreement has still to be mentioned—the establishment of a Bulgarian Principality independent of the Porte in all but name, extending over more than half the whole Balkan Peninsula, its boundaries stretching nearly as far south as Midia on the Black Sea, according to her many miles of Ægean littoral, reaching to the outskirts of Salonika, and including Kastoria, Ochrida, and Monastir in Macedonia.* A Russian Commissioner was to supervise the formation of the Bulgarian Government for two years, and Bulgaria was to be

* See Map, p. 182.

evacuated entirely by Turkish forces and occupied by Russian troops for a period not to exceed two years.

This would never do—or so it seemed to Lord Beaconsfield's Ministry. Turkey driven at the point of the bayonet to sign away her patrimony! And for whose benefit? The Bulgarians! A Bulgarian State would obviously be a diplomatic fiction. A Russian satrapy was to be formed within a day's march of Constantinople! The Panslavists of St Petersburg and the commanders in the field were clamouring for peace to be signed in Constantinople itself. The rumour that Constantinople had actually been entered reached London, and alarm was magnified by dearth of trustworthy information.

Discussion had for some time already been proceeding between the various Powers of Europe as to how far Russia and Turkey were to be allowed to settle matters alone. A proposal for a European Congress, first at Vienna, then at Berlin, had been made, and had been accepted in principle by Prince Gortchakoff on behalf of the Russian Empire. The point which was being argued at the moment was whether the whole Russo-Turkish agreement should be discussed by the Congress, or only those of its clauses which Russia chose to submit. Her Majesty's Government now demanded that "every article should be placed before the Congress, not necessarily for acceptance, but in order that it might be considered which articles required acceptance and which did not." Prince Gortchakoff's reply, which reached England on 27th March, was ambiguous, and couched in somewhat curt and haughty language.[14] The Cabinet met at once and decided to call out the Reserves. Thereupon Lord Derby resigned. Lord Salisbury was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs in his place.

5.

He thus reached, almost at a bound, and at the early age of forty-eight, the summit of his ambition. He was in charge of the foreign policy of the British Empire.

The sea was stormy for the young helmsman; but at the moment there was a lull. Prince Bismarck had announced that he would not issue invitations to the Congress unless all the signatories of the Treaty of Paris agreed to attend; and the deadlock between Russia and Britain threatened indefinite postponement. Austria was bitterly opposed to Russia, but hesitated to defy her. Germany desired the friendship of both Russia and Britain. France and Italy both preferred the British point of view, but would not avow their preference. Europe was waiting for a lead. Lord Salisbury showed the way.

He knew the weakness of Russia. The Turkish war had been a strain on her resources. She was on the brink of bankruptcy. She was mined by revolution. She had no notable military commander. He boldly resolved to challenge her to a diplomatic duel.

He assumed office on 28th March. Next day he had some routine business to finish at the India Office. That night he was dining out in fulfilment of an old engagement. After dinner he excused himself and returned to his house in Arlington Street. From eleven o'clock till three next morning, locked in his study, without advice, help, or provision of data from any outside source, he composed the famous despatch which altered the face of Europe, and has come to be regarded as one of the "historic State papers of the English language."[15]

With cogent logic, in his own terse and virile language he set out reasons why the Treaty of San Stefano should not be allowed to stand. Russia could not be permitted to declare to be final any article she chose. Her Majesty's Government could not accept, he wrote, any partial or fragmentary examination of its provisions. Every material stipulation which the Treaty contained involved a departure from the (Paris) Treaty of 1856 (of which Britain and Russia were signatories with the other Great Powers), and therefore the British Government "could not acquiesce in the withdrawal from the cognisance of the Powers of articles in the

Treaty of San Stefano, which are modifications of existing Treaty engagements, and inconsistent with them."

Passing thence to an examination of the stipulations in detail, the Circular proceeded as follows:—"The most important consequences to which the Treaty practically leads are those which result from its action as a whole upon the nations of South-Eastern Europe. By the articles erecting the new Bulgaria, a strong Slav State will be created under the auspices and control of Russia, possessing important harbours upon the shores of the Black Sea and the Archipelago, and conferring upon that Power a preponderating influence over both political and commercial relations in those seas. It will be so constituted as to merge in the dominant Slav majority a considerable mass of population which is Greek in race and sympathy. . . . The provisions by which this new State is to be subjected to a ruler whom Russia will practically choose, its administration framed by a Russian Commissary, and the first working of its institutions commenced under the control of a Russian army, sufficiently indicate the political system of which it is to form a part."

He pointed out that the territorial severance from Constantinople of the Greek, Albanian, and Slavonic provinces which were still to be left to the Porte would be "a source of administrative embarrassment and political weakness to the Porte itself, and would expose the inhabitants to a serious risk of anarchy." He remarked further that "the compulsory alienation of Bessarabia from Roumania, the extension of Bulgaria to the shores of the Black Sea, which are principally inhabited by Mussulmans and Greeks, and the acquisition of the important harbour of Batoum, will make the rule of the Russian Government dominant over all the vicinity of the Black Sea."

The combined effect of the provisions, he said, "was to depress almost to the point of entire subjection the political independence of the Government of Constantinople." He concluded as follows:—Her

Majesty's Government "would willingly have entered a Congress in which the stipulations in question could have been examined as a whole in their relations to existing treaties. . . . But neither the interests which H.M. Government are specially bound to guard, nor the well-being of the regions with which the treaty deals, would be consulted by the assembling of a Congress whose deliberations were to be restricted by such reservations as those which have been laid down by Prince Gortchakoff in his most recent communications."

The despatch was practically an ultimatum to Russia. Either the San Stefano Treaty would be discussed as a whole at a European Congress, or Britain and Russia would go to war.

It was passed by the Cabinet without modification, and on 1st April was sent out as a Circular Note to British representatives abroad. It rallied the vacillating Powers, and gained cordial and complimentary approbation from every Foreign Minister—except Prince Gortchakoff, who hastened to compose a long and skilful rejoinder.

The Salisbury Circular was backed by the transfer to Malta of 7000 native Indian troops. Russia realised that it really expressed the views of all Europe, and capitulated. Prince Bismarck renewed his offer to act as "honest broker" in Berlin. Invitations to attend a Congress at which the whole Treaty of San Stefano should be discussed were issued, and accepted, even by Russia. It was a singular triumph for Britain; and Salisbury achieved a European reputation overnight. His was a magnificent diplomatic achievement.

6.

It was a historic blunder. His contentions were destined to carry the day at Berlin, and territory torn from the Turk was restored to the Turk; till well into the next century Macedonia became a cause of diplomatic friction between small States and Great

Powers alike, a potential cause of international hostilities, the scene of misrule, oppression, internecine strife, carnage, and finally war; until, after thirty-five years, Turkey was again reduced to about the same dimensions as were allotted to her at San Stefano. The terms of that still-born Treaty provided not only for the virtual disappearance of Turkey from Europe, they settled the still more thorny question of who was to inherit her dominions. But the supposed interests of the Great Powers were preferred to those of the peoples immediately concerned. The lessons of recent history passed unnoted. The nineteenth century had shown a succession of movements—German, Italian, Greek, Serbian, and Roumanian—towards national union and national independence. Yet diplomatists set themselves to refute the logic of history and arrest the decay of Turkey; and it was left to another generation at great cost of men and treasure to accomplish what might then have been easily achieved, the destruction of Turkish influence in Europe.

The whole of Lord Salisbury's argument was based on the assumption that the Bulgarians were incapable of asserting their independence, and bound to fall from the tyranny of the Turk into the grip of the Muscovite. This premise removed, his conclusion falls; and events have shown that his premise was false.

The Bulgars are the most ambitious, the most grasping, the hardest-working, and the least docile of the Balkan peoples. They are Slavs of Tartar origin, and have some affinity with the Hungarians, the most truculent race of Europe. Their character has more persistence than that of Russians, Poles, and other Slav peoples; they have shown far more aptitude for organisation and greater political stability. They are parsimonious and sober. They have a keen national instinct. They silently envisage their country's destiny —and can bide their time to achieve it—though their grasping ambition may lead them to overreach themselves. They were no more likely to tolerate indefinitely the tutelage of Russia than that of the Turks.

It would, no doubt, be demanding unusual insight of Lord Salisbury to expect him then to detect these portents of power in the Bulgarians. They had played an insignificant part in the war of liberation which Russia had waged in their country and on their behalf; and if the British statesman had made the unlikely exertion of studying their poetry, he would have found that the chief poem written at that period by the national bard Vazoff, entitled "Emancipation," was almost entirely concerned with singing the praises of the Russians. One sign of independent existence Bulgaria had already given. In 1870 she had obtained religious autonomy. The Bulgarian Church gained the right to have its own head, known as the Exarch, at Constantinople. In the Balkans religious and political aims are often intertwined, and this step might have attracted greater attention from European statesmen. Prince Bismarck had certainly noted the Bulgarians' independent character, for he told Lord Salisbury in Berlin that he did not think Russia would ever attempt to hold Bulgaria, because it was an "alien population which she could not absorb."[16] And one eminent British diplomatist truly divined the trend of events. Lord Lyons, writing from his Embassy in Paris on 26th February 1878, said that it would be a waste of energy to "bolster up the Turk in this or that district delivered by the Russians": he supposed there must be new Principalities, and he added: "If anything like a national feeling and a national government can be established in them, their danger will be from Russia, and Russia will become their national enemy, unless they are thrown into her arms by a hostility on the part of Austria."[17]

Such discerning foresight of Balkan developments was not vouchsafed to Lord Salisbury, and the first three years of Bulgaria's existence as a semi-independent State seemed fully to justify his expectation, and that of the majority of observers, that she would become a Russian province. All the administrative posts were filled by Russians; Russian officers dominated

the newly-formed militia. The high-water mark of Russian ascendancy was reached in 1881, when the Prime Minister and the Ministers of War, Justice, and the Interior were all Russian generals.[18] It was not unnatural that men extolled the foresight of Lord Salisbury in this matter when he quitted the Foreign Office in 1880.

## 7.

The Congress of Berlin met on 13th June 1878, and on 13th July its labours were completed. Its brief duration is easily explained. Bismarck's methods as President were drastically business-like. He sternly checked any tendency to superfluous oratory. His time-table had to be kept, at whatever cost to the envoys of overwork between the sittings. His plan was to reach a decision on every major point, and to leave minor matters for subsequent settlement by commissions of resident ambassadors and experts. He had his own particular reason for haste. His annual visit to Kissingen was due in July, and he believed the cure to be absolutely indispensable for his health.[19] A still more potent aid to expedition was that most of the difficult points at issue had been settled by private negotiation before the Congress began.

On 1st June the *Globe* newspaper startled all London by publishing an account of a secret agreement concluded between England and Russia. Lord Salisbury and Count Schouvaloff, the Russian Ambassador, it averred, had been engaged in frequent colloquies, and the outcome of them had been that Britain had conceded many of the points against which she had just hotly protested. A summary of them was given. Lord Grey in the House of Lords inquired of the Foreign Secretary whether there was any truth in the statement. Lord Salisbury replied: "The statement to which the noble Earl refers, and other statements which I have seen are wholly unauthentic, and are not deserving of the confidence of your Lordships' House."

It was a lie in the grand style. Lord Salisbury had in fact come to an understanding with Russia on all the main points in dispute except two. An agreement had been signed by himself and Count Schouvaloff on 30th May. There had been a leakage at the Foreign Office, and the *Globe* on 14th June was able to publish its full text.

Diplomacy was the close preserve of the professionals in the Victorian age, and few persons then questioned the desirability of complete secrecy. The terms of European treaties, even the treaties themselves, were framed without the knowledge of the general public; and the custom persisted until the day when the Covenant of the League of Nations has invalidated secret compacts. While Count Schouvaloff, within a few weeks of Britain's violent denunciations of his country's policy, was quietly settling matters with his arraigners, General Ignatieff was in Vienna mollifying Austrian animosity by the secret offer of Bosnia. Bosnia belonged to Turkey; but Russia undertook that Austria should be allowed to occupy and administer it. So to Lord Salisbury it probably never occurred that people would question the wisdom or the propriety of his private arrangement with his adversary; indeed, criticism of the agreement was made almost entirely on the ground that too much had been conceded. He presumably denied its authenticity because he had undertaken with Count Schouvaloff to keep it secret, and because its divulgation would have embarrassed the Prime Minister, who was to be his chief at Berlin. And indeed secrecy wooed by curiosity usually begets lies.

But, accustomed as it was to secret diplomacy, the public was yet astounded to learn soon afterwards that not only had Lord Salisbury made a convention with Russia—he had also, potentially at her expense, struck a bargain with Turkey! The negotiations had been conducted secretly by Mr Layard in Constantinople. Britain was to guarantee to Turkey her Asiatic territories, and assume some

responsibility for the good government of their Christian inhabitants. In return, and so long as Russia retained her conquests in Asia Minor, Britain was to receive and retain Cyprus. On 28th May 1878, two days before the private agreement with Russia was signed, the Sultan was invited to sign a Convention embodying these stipulations. He was given forty-eight hours in which to come to a decision. Abdul Hamid was informed that if he did not accept, Britain would abandon her opposition to Russia's advance, and join in the partition of his Empire. Faced with this alternative, and knowing that Salisbury usually meant what he said, the Sultan signed the Convention.[20]

At the Congress itself Lord Salisbury played a secondary though a very important part. The principal role was Lord Beaconsfield's, who there reached the zenith of his career. The dramatic moves, the threats and cajoleries, the romantic touches of political genius were his: Salisbury did the spade-work. Beaconsfield made a slow and stately progress to Berlin, eagerly sought at successive stations as the Oriental who had achieved a record unique in British annals,[21] and acclaimed as the world's most picturesque statesman, second in greatness, of course, in the eyes of German crowds, to Bismarck—but to Bismarck alone. Salisbury travelled to his post unobserved, eluding even the members of his own staff who were to travel with him from Charing Cross. Beaconsfield delighted in the Royal audiences, sumptuous banquets, and "gala" ceremonies which awaited him in Berlin. Lord Salisbury was bored by them. Both spent the first week-end with the Crown Prince and Princess at Potsdam. Beaconsfield wrote home rapturously about the visit; Salisbury apologetically. On 23rd June he wrote to Lady Salisbury: "Six hours out of my day have been taken away by that tiresome Princess asking me to lunch at Potsdam." He complained of the fatigue caused by the constant entertainment. Beaconsfield, indeed, in spite of his great enjoyment

of it, seems to have been more prostrated than his colleague. "He looks ill," wrote Salisbury of his chief at the outset, "sleeps badly—did not sleep this morning till six;" and he had to drag himself straight from a sick-bed to the Radetzky Palace to sign the final treaty a month later. "What with deafness, ignorance of French, and Bismarck's extraordinary mode of speech, Beaconsfield has the dimmest idea of what is going on," noted Salisbury in privacy to his wife. But the old man could always rise to a crisis. The most important difference left outstanding between Britain and Russia was the question whether the Turk should or should not have the right to keep an army in Eastern Roumelia, the part of Bulgaria that lay south of the Balkan mountains and which was to remain to the Sultan. Britain made the Turkish claim her own, and expressed readiness to go to war if Russia would not yield it. Bismarck, who wanted a peaceful solution, was alarmed. Beaconsfield had ordered a special train to be in readiness to take the British Mission back to Calais. Gortchakoff, the Russian Plenipotentiary, ordered his trunks to be packed, and let all Berlin hear about it. Bismarck hurried round to Beaconsfield's hotel and asked him to dine with him at six o'clock (21st June). Beaconsfield cancelled an engagement at the British Embassy and accepted. During dinner Bismarck was "very agreeable indeed . . . made no allusion to politics, and, tho' he ate and drank a great deal, talked more." After dinner, the two statesmen—the two greatest in the world—retired to another room. Bismarck had to find out whether the other man was bluffing. For an hour and a half Beaconsfield bluffed him that he was not. "He smoked and I followed. I believe I gave the last blow to my shattered constitution, but I felt it absolutely necessary . . . he was convinced that the ultimatum was not a sham, and before I went to bed I had the satisfaction of knowing that St Petersburg had surrendered" (Diary, 21st June).[22] A previous ruse had probably in itself secured the

surrender of St Petersburg. Two days before he had sat next to Count Corti, the Italian Plenipotentiary, at a dinner at the Italian Embassy. "Knowing my man: that he was a favourite of Bismarck, who talked freely to him, and that as the Ambassador of an almost neutral State he had the ear of everyone, I told him, in confidence and as an old friend, that I took the gloomiest view of affairs, and that if Russia would not accept our proposals, I had resolved to break up the Congress." The Tsar's rescript in which the point was yielded left St Petersburg on the 20th by special messenger.[23]

One other important point, which Beaconsfield also seems to have regarded as a potential *casus belli* when it first came before the Congress,[24] had been left undecided by Salisbury and Schouvaloff in London—namely, the fate of Batoum. This port on the south-east coast of the Black Sea had been occupied by Russia, who desired to retain it. Britain suggested an "independent Khanate" to include a substantial hinterland. Lord Salisbury, by his chief's instructions, broached the subject at Berlin with Schouvaloff, who was serving there as second Russian envoy. It was agreed that the port should belong to Russia, but should be "exclusivement commercial." Then, however, Prince Gortchakoff "got at Beaconsfield . . . when he was very ill and substituted 'essentiellement' for 'exclusivement,' persuading him that the two words meant the same thing." The extent of the hinterland was also settled in Russia's favour by a trick. Lord Salisbury thus describes the transaction in a letter to Mr Cross, acting head of the Government at home during Beaconsfield's absence. The agreed line had been marked on a map. "We met in Congress at two. G(ortchakoff) produced the map marked with a totally different line . . . and swore it was the right one. It was in vain B. and I swore the contrary . . . the old wretch knew that B. was short-sighted and ignorant of detail, and took the opportunity of substituting another line."

The secret of the Cyprus Convention had hitherto remained undivulged. At the beginning of July, however, rumours of it began to be heard in Berlin, and Lord Salisbury, by a happy stroke of instinctive tact, resolved to avert possible unpleasantness by communicating it officially and confidentially to France, from whom the chief opposition would be likely to come. He informed the French Plenipotentiary of it on 7th July. The confidence was made only just in time, for the Convention was published in London by the *Daily Telegraph* next day. But Salisbury's explanations and assurances to M. Waddington (the French envoy) had entirely satisfactory results.[25] Other nations were envious, but acquiescent. On the evening when the Convention became public there was a reception at the Austrian Embassy. A general feeling of slight annoyance pervaded the assembled guests—that was all, except the Russians, who were sullenly furious. Beaconsfield walked quietly along, his countenance sphinx-like, but a certain jauntiness in his gait. "What are you thinking of?" Princess Radziwill asked him. "I am not thinking," he replied, "I am enjoying myself."[26]

French opposition to our seizure of Cyprus had been stilled by a hint from Salisbury that an extension of France's influence in Tunis would meet with no objection from Britain. There can be no doubt that, even when Lord Salisbury was vigorously supporting Turkey, the idea of the ultimate partition of her dominions was never far from his mind. He regarded her as a decaying State; and the occupation of Cyprus was only the beginning of a plan which would gradually have brought Asia Minor under British influence and have made the Bagdad railway, already then projected, a British concern. He imagined for Anatolia the fate of Egypt. In furtherance of his undertaking to obtain good government for its Christian races he appointed, on his return to London, British Consuls to the chief places of Asia Minor. He made, in the two years that followed, repeated remonstrances to the Porte on its

tardiness in improving its administration. "We shall get the promise of the reforms," he said on 5th August 1878, "which will not be kept; we shall set to work on the (Bagdad) railway; we shall get or claim the right to defend the railway, and then we shall carry out with a strong hand what had been promised." . . . At the end of the memorandum he writes: "But I fear these are dreams."[27]

His sorrowful conclusion was justified. Yet stranger dreams have come true. The seed sown by Salisbury's consuls did not all fall on barren ground, and still to-day quiet Turkish peasants in remote villages cherish the hope that British gentlemen will come and give them decent administration. It may be that the acquaintance which Australians made with Turks on the cliffs of Gallipoli will at some not very distant period be renewed, to the content and benefit of both, on the fertile plains of Anatolia.

8.

The British Plenipotentiaries were accorded a tumultuous greeting from the London crowds when they returned. Beaconsfield claimed that they brought "peace with honour," and the phrase became famous. Both representatives were admitted to the Order of the Garter by Queen Victoria.

The principal measure achieved by British diplomacy at Berlin was the continued dismemberment of the Bulgarian race, ephemerally united in one Principality by the Treaty of San Stefano. The new arrangement did not endure any more than the division of the Roumanian race attempted by the Congress of Paris in 1856. More than any other diplomatists at Berlin, the British Plenipotentiaries considered their own interests before those of the populations affected by their decisions. In order to thwart Russia they divided the Bulgaria of San Stefano into three parts. Bulgaria proper was not to extend farther south than the Balkan mountains. South of that range a "province of Eastern Roumelia" was created, which

was to have administrative autonomy, but to remain under the "direct political and military authority of the Sultan." The Bulgarians of Thrace and Macedonia were left under the direct rule, or misrule, of Turkey. Just as the divided halves of Roumania had defied diplomatic decrees and effected their union by both electing the same Prince in 1859, so Bulgarians of Eastern Roumelia united themselves with their compatriots north of the Balkan range in 1885; and the desire of union manifested by the third branch of the race, the Bulgars of Thrace and Macedonia, has been the principal cause of trouble in the Balkans from that day to this. Bosnia and Herzegovina were handed over to Austria, which thus became a rival to Russia for influence in the Balkans, and the connecting-link between Balkan trouble and a European war. The interests of Roumania were sacrificed to Russia, whom she had materially assisted in the war. Bessarabia, which was inhabited by Roumanians, was taken from her by Russia, who thereby gained access to the mouths of the Danube. In exchange Roumania was given the marshy district of the Dobruja, which she did not want. She has finally regained Bessarabia in 1919. In his Circular Lord Salisbury protested against the Roumanian arrangement; he acquiesced in it at Berlin. Similarly the British Foreign Secretary at first warmly supported the claims of Greece to Epirus and Thessaly; but at the Congress his Prime Minister opposed the idea that the plenipotentiaries had come to Berlin "in order to partition a worn-out State" (Turkey). "There is again a Turkey in Europe," exclaimed Bismarck—and Beaconsfield reports his remark with great delight. "As for Greece," Beaconsfield said, "States, like individuals, which have a future are in a position to be able to wait." Finally it was decided to appoint a special Commission to discuss and decide the question of a new Græco-Turkish frontier. The Porte first named as meeting-place for the Commissioners a village to the north of the Gulf of Arta, which was not discoverable on any map. When the mistake had

been rectified, the Greek representatives were twice prevented from entering the Gulf by being fired on by the Turks. Finally the Commission met, but its decisions were set aside by the Porte.[28]

Lord Salisbury's first experience of international affairs left him wiser and more wary. At Constantinople he had thrown himself whole-heartedly on the side of Russia; in his Circular Note eighteen months later he had championed Turkey against her. The Control Commissions, which he had tried to force upon the Sultan in 1876, would have established the influence of Russia in the Balkans far more firmly than the Treaty of San Stefano, which he denounced. He would have been better advised to have listened to the man on the spot, and have adopted Sir Henry Elliot's policy of placating Russia and introducing only such reforms as were acceptable to Turkey, and which the great influence and unrivalled popularity of Britain at Constantinople might have made effective. Thus war might have been averted. But the war having taken place, and Turkey having been almost expelled from Europe, it was unnecessary to Britain and pernicious to the cause of peace to set her up again. He had totally misjudged the Bulgarians. He did not realise the force of nationality which would insist alike on independence from Russia and on national union.

He afterwards admitted his mistakes. In 1885 he wrote: "Every week's experience shows that the Porte had little to dread from the subserviency of Bulgaria to foreign influence if only Bulgaria was allowed enjoyment of her unanimous desires. . . . A Bulgaria, friendly to the Porte and jealous of foreign influence, would be a far surer bulwark against foreign aggression than two Bulgarias." . . . In 1891 he referred in a speech at the Mansion House to the "present and the future" of Bulgaria in an almost enthusiastic tone.

This straightforward admission of mistakes earned him the respect and trust of his countrymen. To a great extent his error had been theirs. He had truly

represented public opinion in opposing Turkey after the horrors of 1876; he had been its mouthpiece in crying "Stop" to Russia when she stood at the gates of Constantinople. He learned later to distinguish between the temporary ebullitions and the settled convictions of the British people. He came also to trust the man on the spot; and Britain's representatives abroad were always ready to take a needful initiative boldly if they knew that Salisbury reigned in Whitehall.

These first two years at the Foreign Office served to bring into the clearest relief the Salisburian doctrine that the actual line of policy is less important than the methods by which it is pursued. The advantages of one policy over another might be so evenly balanced, and their ultimate consequences be so difficult to estimate, that the important point was honestly to choose a course of action and vigorously to follow it through. Lord Salisbury seems throughout to have been undecided as to the relative merits of consolidating or partitioning Turkey. But there was no indecision in action. If the Cyprus Convention had not been accepted by Abdul Hamid before the Berlin Congress opened he was, as we have seen, imperturbably determined to have joined with Russia and the other Powers in making an end of Turkish power altogether.

His first tenure of the Foreign Secretaryship gained him the name of a strong and resolute statesman although he had changed his policy; and it gained him a reputation for honesty although he had told a famous lie. The Salisbury Circular made possible the then uncertain summoning of the Berlin Congress, and established the basis on which it was convoked. It reasserted Britain's depreciated authority in Asia and in Europe. "You would hardly believe," wrote the British Ambassador in Vienna on 11th June 1878, two days before the Congress opened, "the change in the position of England in Continental estimation that has been operated within the last two months; but it would be gratifying to those who have brought it

about if they could see it as much as we do, who live abroad."[29] Most true it is that the immense power for good or evil which British foreign policy carries with it is not easily recognised by those Englishmen who reside within the boundaries of the British Isles.

REPRODUCED FROM "PHILIPS' JUNIOR HISTORI

BALKAN STATES 1878-1913.
Balkan States in 1878
Ottoman Emp.
Rumania
Bulgaria
Serbia
Greece
Acquisitions from 1878 to 1912 shown in darker colours
Boundaries proposed by Treaty of San Stefano 1878
Boundaries of Balkan States by Treaties of London and Bucharest 1913
33a
RUSSIA
Finland
St. Petersburg
Reval
Dorpat (Yuriev)
Riga
Baltic Provinces
Dvina
Warsaw
Vistula
Kiev
Ukraine
Lemberg
Galicia
Carpathians
Transylvania
HUNGARY
RUMANIA
Bucharest
Danube
Pleiva
Plevna
Varna
Shipka P.
Sofia
E. Rumelia
Philippopolis
Adrianople
Constantinople
Scutari
Dniester
Pruth
Bessarabia
Moldavia
Odessa
Dnieper
Bug
S. of Azov
Crimea
Sebastopol
Balaklava
Inkerman
BLACK SEA
Sinope
Trebizond
Angora
Asia Minor
Smyrna
Athens
GREECE
Crete
Rhodes
Cyprus (Br. 1878)
Antioch
Alexandretta
Aleppo
Euphrates
Tigris
Mosul
Kurdistan
Armenia
Erzerum
Tabriz
PERSIA
Circassia
Caucasus
Daghestan
Tiflis
Georgia
Kars
Erivan
Batum
Baku
CASPIAN SEA
Beyrout
Damascus
Syria
Jerusalem
Port Said
Alexandria
Canal
Suez
Egypt
Cairo
Arabia
Belgrade
SERBIA
Bosnia
(Austrian Occupation 1878)
(Annexed 1908)
Sarajevo
Novibazar
Nish
Sofia
Danube
Jassy
Moldavia
Bucharest
Dobrudja
to Russia 1878
to Rumania 1913
(United States 1861)
(Independent 1877)
(Independent 1878)
(Principality 1878)
(Indep. Kingdom 1909)
Varna
Burgas
Eastern Rumelia
(Rulg. 1885)
Adrianople
Constantinople
Stefano
Scutari
Bosporus
Dardanelles
Gallipoli
Asia Minor
Smyrna
Samos
Principality 1832
Greek Occupation 1912
Autonomous State 1898
CRETE
Annexed by Greece 1913
Montenegro
Cettinje
Antivari
Durazzo
Albania
Valona
Janina
Salonica
Monastir
Uskub
Macedonia
Thessaly
Larissa
Ionian Is.
Corfu
Prevesa
Arta
Gulf of Corinth
Gulf of Finland
Nikmen
Danzig
Königsberg
Memel
Riga
Transferred to Bulgaria 1913
Transferred to Turkey 1913
Transferred to Greece 1913
Autonomy of Albania 1913
Autonomy of Crete 1913
Autonomy of Thessaly 1881
Ionian Is. to Greece 1863
Principality of Albania 1913
Principality of Montenegro 1878
Principality of Serbia 1878
Principality of Rumania 1878
Principality of Bulgaria 1878
Eastern Rumelia to Bulgaria 1885
Bosnia Annexed 1908
Herzegovina
Novibazar
Ottoman Empire
Mediterranean Sea
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Persia
Arabia
Egypt
Greece
Turkey
Russia
Hungary
Rumania
Bulgaria
Serbia
Montenegro
Albania
Crete
Cyprus
Syria
Kurdistan
Armenia
Asia Minor
Circassia
Georgia
Daghestan
Crimea
Bessarabia
Moldavia
Wallachia
Transylvania
Galicia
Ukraine
Finland
Baltic Provinces
Poland
Prussia
Austria
Italy
Sicily
Malta
Tripoli
Tunis
Algeria
Morocco
Spain
France
Germany
Switzerland
Belgium
Holland
Denmark
Sweden
Norway
Scotland
England
Ireland
Iceland
Atlantic Ocean
North Sea
Baltic Sea
Red Sea
Persian Gulf
Gulf of Aden
Gulf of Suez
Gulf of Aqaba
Gulf of Sidra
Gulf of Gabes
Gulf of Tunis
Gulf of Lyons
Gulf of Genoa
Gulf of Venice
Gulf of Taranto
Gulf of Patras
Gulf of Corinth
Gulf of Finland
Gulf of Bothnia
Gulf of Riga
Gulf of Danzig
Gulf of Archangel
Gulf of Obi
Gulf of Ob
Gulf of Yenisei
Gulf of Lena
Gulf of Kara
Gulf of Pechora
Gulf of Mezen
Gulf of Onega
Gulf of Bothnia
Gulf of Finland

# CHAPTER III

## LIBERALS AT THE HELM

"And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

TENNYSON.

### 1.

THE intrusion of Party politics into Foreign Affairs had one great advantage — it ensured the lively interest of the electorate. The passionate polemics of Lord Beaconsfield's and Mr Gladstone's supporters invaded the discussion of even trivial incidents abroad. For some weeks in 1876 England was convulsed by the question whether Canon Liddon, from the deck of a Danube steamer, had or had not seen a Christian victim of Turkish barbarity writhing on an impalement post. If he had, it was a point to Mr Gladstone; if, as Sir Henry Elliot maintained, the man was a cattle-keeper craning from the top of a notched pole to get a better sight of his herds,[1] it was a point to Lord Beaconsfield. When the allocation of Batoum was being discussed at Berlin, Lord Salisbury wrote: "Batoum is a great bother. Its real importance is not very large but . . . a few strenuous Jingoes have contrived to persuade the world that it is a great matter;" and Sir Stafford Northcote replied from London that if the Government could be charged with having sold Kars and Batoum for Cyprus, "we should be out before you could get home."[2] Having sold Batoum to Russia! Under the Coalition system of Government in 1921, did anybody much mind to whom Mr Lloyd George "sold" Upper Silesia? although Upper Silesia contains one of the most

valuable industrial centres in Europe, is nearer home and more material to us than Batoum, and Germany was at least as much our enemy as Russia was in 1878. When Beaconsfield returned triumphant from Berlin the same London mob which exuberantly accorded him his supreme moment of glory compelled Mr Gladstone to seek the shelter of a friendly hall-door.[3]

No doubt, too, the division of feeling over the Russo-Turkish quarrel more truly represented the sentiments of the country than if, for the sake of decency, a united front had been presented to the outside world. Yet the drawbacks of partisan conduct of foreign policy very greatly outweigh its advantages. Insincerity seems to be inseparable from Party warfare; and the two-Party system connotes discontinuity of policy. So violent and offensive had been Mr Gladstone's denunciation of Austria during his Midlothian campaign, that when he became Prime Minister in 1880 he felt compelled to extend an apology to Count Karolyi, the Austrian Ambassador[4]—a humiliating sequel, for a British Prime Minister, to the gibe of an Opposition Leader. While Beaconsfield and Salisbury were actually bargaining on behalf of their country abroad, virulent criticism of their acts was unceasing. Lord Salisbury expressed himself very bitterly about it. "Every calumny, every misconstruction that malignant ingenuity could invent was paraded forth in order to lessen our influence and hinder our efforts."[5]

The elections of 1880 turned the Conservatives out of office, and brought in a leader who was pledged by his electoral addresses to undo what his predecessors had done. Sir Henry Layard, the Turcophil Ambassador at the Porte, was recalled, in spite of an attempt on his part to conform his policy to that of the new Ministry. The sudden denunciation of the rule which we had championed began, in the opinion of some close observers, the decline of British influence in Constantinople. Lord Lytton was recalled from the Viceroyalty, and our policy in regard to Afghanistan

was as far as possible reversed. Lord Salisbury, as we know, had at Berlin suggested to France that no objection would be raised by Britain to French penetration into Tunis. When France, in accordance with this understanding, formed an agreement with the Bey of Tunis in 1881, Mr Gladstone raised every possible objection, notably in regard to the fortification of the port of Bizerta and the conclusion of a commercial treaty.[6] The cry of "Perfide Albion" was not unnaturally once more heard in France.

A far-reaching foreign policy was made impossible. Lord Salisbury's plan for the reconstruction of the Turkish Empire in Asia under British auspices was cut short. It seemed no longer feasible in foreign affairs to lay the foundation-stone of schemes which it would take a few years to consummate. Hand to mouth diplomacy appeared alone compatible with democratic control.[7]

2.

Lord Beaconsfield once exclaimed: "I want to see the Queen dictatress of Europe." Mr Gladstone had different ideals. In a speech at West Calder, 2nd April 1880, he defined the "right principles of foreign policy."[8] They were as follows:—

1. To foster the strength of the Empire by just legislation and economy at home.
2. To preserve to the nations of the world the blessings of peace.
3. To strive to cultivate and maintain the Concert of Europe.
4. To avoid needless and entangling engagements.
5. To acknowledge the equal rights of all nations.
6. The foreign policy of England should always be inspired by the love of freedom.

Within a few months the propounder of these theories, in which not one single word occurs as to furthering or even defending the legitimate interests of Britain, was called upon to put them into practice.

To summarise the results of Mr Gladstone's foreign policy during the five years of his power (1880-1885) is to make sorry reading :—

1. Afghanistan. Withdrawal from Kandahar. Decline of British influence.
2. Asia Minor. Withdrawal of consuls appointed by Salisbury. Decline of British influence throughout the Turkish Empire. Defencelessness of the Armenians and other Christian races.
3. Egypt. Withdrawal from the Sudan. Murder of General Gordon isolated at Khartoum.
4. South Africa. Withdrawal from the Transvaal.

Events have justified the withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the policy of Lord Lawrence then re-adopted by Mr Gladstone has become traditional. The policy of penetration approved by Lord Salisbury and Lord Lytton has proved unnecessary. The rise of Russian influence which followed the decline of Britain's has not had serious consequences for the races of India.

The abdication of British authority in Asia Minor left the field entirely open to German enterprise; and since 1883 the influence of Berlin permeated increasingly the Sultan's lands in Europe and Asia. The lot of Greeks and Armenians became steadily worse, and culminated in a series of massacres between 1894 and 1897. It is impossible to say with certitude what the course of events would have been had Lord Salisbury's policy been continued. But during the first two years of their residence in Asia Minor the British consuls, unfailingly backed by strong representations at Constantinople, had secured the dismissal of several of the worst Turkish officials, and redressed the wrongs done to innumerable individual Christians.

Both in the Sudan and South Africa British public opinion has sanctioned costly and destructive wars in order to retrieve the position lost by Mr Gladstone. For pusillanimity in foreign policy has almost always had for result, either the permanent diminution of British

authority or subsequent vast expenditure of men and money to regain what might have been held or won by the prompt exercise of a little energy.

Nor was the direct loss to British power the worst consequence of Mr Gladstone's ultra-pacific policy; its indirect consequences were graver. Foreign countries took advantage of British complaisance; and so deep was the impression then made that a Liberal Foreign Secretary has ever since been handicapped by the idea that his advent to office was the opportunity of his country's enemies.

Our rivals took heart. Germany seems about that time first dimly to have formulated the idea of challenging our position as the world's greatest civilising Power. Two years after the Liberals' assumption of office, in 1882, the famous Colonial Society was founded in Berlin; though it derived its chief support from the Hanseatic towns. Bismarck was at first opposed to Colonial undertakings, but allowed himself to be carried away by the enthusiasm of others. He was careful, however, to avoid conflict with Britain, and very often managed so to arrange that in the triangular contest in Colonial expansion that followed between Britain, Germany, and France, the latter found herself single-handed against arrangements combined by England and Germany. Whenever we gave an opening Germany stepped in. As in Asia Minor, so in South Africa.

The annexation of the Transvaal had been denounced by Mr Gladstone in his Midlothian campaign. When therefore the Liberals came into office in 1880, the Boers expected a restoration of their independence. Nothing being done, they rose at the end of the year, surprised and cut up a British detachment and occupied Laing's Nek, the pass leading from the Transvaal to Natal. In January 1881 Majuba Hill, commanding the Nek, was stormed by the Boers, and the British general in command was killed. Then we granted the Boers their independence. We will only quote comments made by two Liberal historians on this matter.

"The galling argument was that the Government had conceded to three defeats what they had refused to ten times as many petitions, memorials, remonstrances."[9] And Mr (afterwards Lord) Bryce:[10] "The Boers saw in the conduct of the British Government neither generosity nor humanity, but only fear . . . and fancied themselves entitled to add some measure of contempt to the dislike they already cherished to the English."

The chief Boer leader, thenceforward known as President Krüger, went to London in 1884 and signed with Mr Gladstone his Treaty of independence, Britain retaining a very restricted "suzerainty." Thence he proceeded to Berlin, and received a warm welcome from Bismarck and Kaiser Wilhelm I. At a State Banquet at Potsdam, Krüger was moved to declare:—"It is a blessing of God that we are able to turn to Your Majesty and to your Empire looks of affection and confidence." The Kaiser, without speaking, rose, shook his guest warmly by the hand, and embraced him.[11]

Meanwhile the Germans showed their practical friendship by occupying the territory of Angra Pequena, north of the Orange River, from which it was considered that communications might be opened up with the Boer Republics.[12] This was the beginning of the future colony of German South-West Africa. The Cape Government protested, and Lord Granville, Mr Gladstone's Foreign Secretary, in vain repeated the protest. When a deputation under Sir Donald Currie called on Lord Derby, then Colonial Minister, to warn him as to German designs in those regions, he received the reply that "Germany was not a colonising Power." We recognised the *fait accompli* of German annexation in June 1884. Only the prompt anticipatory action of Sir Bartle Frere saved to British interests the valuable roadstead of Walfish Bay.

Further north in the Togo and Cameroon districts of West Africa, the adventurous German explorer Nachtigall outstripped the British Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Samuel Rowe, and placed many

miles of valuable territory under the German flag, acquisitions which were recognised by Britain by treaty on 7th May 1885 and 2nd August 1886.

Before 1880 the Sultan of Zanzibar had been regarded as "under the direct influence of the United Kingdom and of the Government of India."[13] In and after that year, however, German merchants arrived in considerable numbers and occupied the neighbouring mainland; and some years later (1884) Dr Karl Peters, a noted explorer, penetrated to Zanzibar disguised as a mechanic, and armed with a number of blank treaty-forms, with the aid of which he persuaded a number of chiefs to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Kaiser. Eventually, in April 1885, Sir John Kirk, the creator of the hitherto unchallenged supremacy of British interests on the mainland belonging to the Sultan of Zanzibar, was ordered by the Cabinet to yield to German pretensions, and the future colony of German East Africa was founded. The British Governor had perforce to obey orders; the Sultan of Zanzibar only retired after a German squadron had arrived to enforce his consent to this arrangement.[14]

A more pronounced humiliation was inflicted on British diplomacy in the Congo question. A dispute having arisen over the rights to the mouths of the Congo river, Britain and Portugal concluded a treaty in 1884 (26th February) recognising Portuguese suzerainty, but safeguarding British commercial interests. Exception was taken to the treaty by Prince Bismarck, and the British Government actually agreed not to submit it to Queen Victoria for ratification. Bismarck, thus encouraged, convoked an international conference at Berlin in the following November, at which complete liberty of navigation on the Congo river was guaranteed, and the British preferential rights were swept aside. Moreover, a clause was adopted whereby no occupation of territory should be recognised unless it were actually made effective by the presence of troops or officials of the occupying Power. Till that time Britain had claimed many an island and valuable possession on

the score of discovery, or through the presence of a handful of merchants, without our claims being disputed.

Thenceforward, Germany bade us prove our titles. And the same process by which in the eighteenth century France, through pre-occupations nearer home, gradually lost her world-wide influence to Britain, now began to be repeated, only with this difference, that Britain took for a few years the role of loser, and Germany the vigorous heir of weary Titan. In 1886, however, Lord Salisbury returned; then, in the words of a French historian:[15] "Partout elle (Germany) rencontra l'Angleterre, qui avec Salisbury avait été reprise de la fièvre impérialiste. La politique intérieure était devenue l'un des moindres soucis du gouvernement."

France, in the meantime, was bestirring herself to some purpose. In his *Life of Lord Lyons*, Lord Newton writes (p. 440): "The interest of the year 1881 lies in the fact that it makes a fresh departure in French foreign policy and the abandonment of the retiring and timorous attitude which had prevailed ever since the war with Germany." In the matter of colonial expansion she occupied the Dahomey territory of West Africa in 1883; she conquered Indo-China in 1885; and took over the island of Madagascar (1885). In all three places she met with some ineffectual opposition from us.

Russia took advantage of the feeble conduct of British foreign affairs to occupy Merv, an oasis within 200 miles of the Afghan frontier (1884), although she had undertaken not to do so. In the following year (March 1885), one month, that is, after the fall of Gordon, she encroached nearer to the sphere of British influence and occupied the Afghan frontier post of Penjdeh. The "gentle reproaches" of Lord Granville at St Petersburg only awakened contempt.[16] Russia chose the year 1893, when another Liberal Ministry was in power, to seize the Pamirs, where Afghanistan, China, and the Indian Empire meet.

Throughout the whole of his premiership, from 1880 to 1885, Mr Gladstone's activities in other directions were hampered by the imbroglio in which his own vacillation and lack of clear policy involved him in Egypt and the Sudan. The British occupation of Egypt is generally regarded as the classic example of reluctant imperialism, and the story has been told in so many standard works that a brief recital of the facts must suffice here.

Britain and France, who had large interests in Egypt, were trying to restore her financial stability. A condominium had been established, and since 1876 a British and a French controller had been attempting, without much success, to restore financial equilibrium. In 1881 Arabi headed a rebellion against the Khedive, Britain, and France, and by 1882 was practically master of Egypt. In June of that year there was an outbreak at Alexandria, during which 200 Europeans were killed.

Fleets were sent to Alexandria by Britain and France to safeguard European lives. Arabi began to strengthen the forts of the town and arm the populace. He was ordered to desist, but refused. On 11th July the British admiral bombarded and destroyed the forts. The French fleet refused to take any part in this action, and sailed away. July 11th 1882 is therefore the important date which marks the abdication by France of the paramount position which she had held in Egypt since the days of Napoleon, for in the complications which followed Britain had to act single-handed.

Mr Gladstone decided that the rebellion must be suppressed, and sent out Lord Wolseley, who defeated Arabi at Tel-el-Kebir. Wolseley, by a daring move, then seized Cairo, and the rebellion subsided in Egypt.

It had, however, in the meantime spread to the Sudan, which belonged to Egypt. The revolt was there headed by the Mahdi, and the Khedive was quite powerless to quell it.

Mr Gladstone wished the occupation of Egypt to

be temporary, and had not the slightest desire to undertake the "costly and difficult task" of reconquering the Sudan for the Khedive. But the Egyptian garrisons at Khartoum and other places could not well be left to their fate. General Gordon was therefore sent out to arrange for their withdrawal. He found the task impossible; but refused to leave, and was besieged in Khartoum himself.

"As the year (1884) went on, and Gordon was still besieged, public opinion forced the Ministry to send a British army to his rescue."[17] But Khartoum fell (January 1885) and Gordon was slain. His heroism and death were in themselves a great incentive to his countrymen to establish some day good government throughout the lands bordering on Egypt. Meanwhile, however, the Sudan was evacuated and relapsed into barbarism. The sixth point in Mr Gladstone's principles of foreign policy was freedom. The Sudan has had the only form of practical freedom which it has known since it came under British rule in 1898. There was a terrible contradiction between Mr Gladstone's words and his acts, between his clear vision and his feeble policy. He had written in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1877: "We cannot enjoy the luxury of taking Egypt by inches . . . our first site in Egypt . . . will be the almost certain egg of a North African Empire, that will grow and grow . . . till we finally join hands across the Equator with Natal and Cape Town, to say nothing of the Transvaal and the Orange River on the south, or of Abyssinia or Zanzibar. . . ."[18] He stifled his own convictions for the sake of popularity at home, and refused to see the full scope of a responsibility.

3.

When Lord Salisbury returned to the Foreign Office in 1885 he eagerly consulted its documents as to the actual condition of British influence in Constantinople. When he had perused them he exclaimed: "They have

just thrown it away into the sea, without getting anything whatever in exchange."[19]

This was the contemptuous cry of a political opponent. But there is general agreement as to the unfortunate results of Gladstonian foreign policy from 1880 to 1885; and we may well ask, what did the Liberal Ministry give the country in exchange for its abdicated authority, undefended interests, and diminished prestige abroad? An answer is, that Liberals have always made their first care the welfare of the people at home. Their political creed was stated in its plainest form by Mr John Bright. Mr Bright, who retired from Mr Gladstone's Cabinet when the bombardment of Alexandria was approved, pronounced against the use of soldiers altogether, and declared once in a speech that "this foreign policy, this regard for the liberties of Europe . . . this excessive love for the balance of power, is neither more or less than a gigantic system of outdoor relief for the aristocracy of Great Britain." "I care," he added, "for the condition of the people among whom I live."[20] And Mr Gladstone himself stated much the same conviction when he said that good government at home was the first principle of foreign policy, "thereby producing two of the great elements of national power, wealth . . . and union and contentment." He would reserve the expenditure of that strength, he added, "for great and worthy occasions abroad." History, the history of his own Administration, has shown that judicious expenditure in time saves the vast expense which "great and worthy occasions" are apt to cause, and that the best guarantee of peace is a firm but unprovocative policy.

It cannot be denied that Gladstonian methods brought us at any rate considerable popularity in many foreign countries. The cession of the Ionian islands to Greece was a noble act, which has enhanced the reputation of Britain in the Near East from that day to this, and shown that there are rare occasions on which a country's policy can be disinterested with impunity. Even that act was misinterpreted,

as Bismarck's well-known comment showed: "Une puissance qui commence à rendre est une puissance finie." Yet when Mr Gladstone was hailed by distinguished foreign politicians as "one of the glories of mankind," when we perceive to-day the glow of gratitude which Italians feel for him still for his scathing indictment of the Bourbon misrule in Naples, when we come in unexpected places of Europe upon his fame as friend of the oppressed, we feel that it is no mean thing that such a famous friend of liberty should have been an Englishman like ourselves. The encouragement of Liberal causes which marked Mr Gladstone's earlier years is a natural and a proper function for the statesmen of the British democracy, and more especially for its Liberal representatives.

The Liberal contention that to increase the prosperity and the unity of the people at home is to add to the strength of the country, and therefore to increase its potential influence abroad, is unexceptionable in theory; and no doubt the various measures of social, political, and educational reform introduced by them have increased the national power. But it is unfortunately equally true that most of their legislative activities, notably those connected with Ireland, with Labour and the House of Lords have caused such a sharp division of opinion, have roused such a passion of controversy, that the desired unity has entirely disappeared, and the attention of Ministers has been so absorbed in home affairs that foreign policy has suffered.

Mr Gladstone's great successes were won as financier, and it is probable that his lack of enterprise in foreign affairs is primarily attributable to his desire for economy. He was always endeavouring to cut down expenditure on the naval and military forces, and the attempt could hardly consort with a spirited foreign policy. His careful husbandry and fiscal reform bequeathed to his successors resources which were able to stand the strain of great emergencies. Yet to arrest the development of those emergencies would perhaps have been the truer statesmanship.

It seems, moreover, unfortunately to be the case in diplomacy that you cannot pursue a disinterested policy without prejudice to your own people. Mr Gladstone himself seems to have been driven to this conclusion, and we observe that at the close of his Ministry his attitude became steadily more resolute. Unfortunately his earlier expressions of magnanimous aspirations not only had the mischievous consequence that they were construed to denote weakness; they also gave an air of hypocrisy to such vigorous action as he subsequently took. Before he retired Mr Gladstone had taken over the Somali Coast, annexed the Oil Rivers, chartered the British North Borneo Company and the Royal Niger Company, and had established British rule in Bechuanaland[21]; he had annexed Burma, and he had not left Egypt. The natural energy of his countrymen, the enterprise of merchants, the administrative talent and civilising instinct of Englishmen, and the readiness of uncivilised races to respond to it, had made him their convert. In 1885 we find him preparing to fight Russia over the Penjdeh affair. When he returned to power for a short half-year in 1886, and again for the last time in 1892, he showed his conversion by calling to his side a brilliant young Liberal Imperialist, whose outlook was known to differ materially from the complaisance of Lord Granville.

4.

Lord Rosebery is one of the great might-have-beens of British politics. His upbringing, his talents, and his tastes converged to the production of an ideal Foreign Secretary. When he left Oxford he already had his place in the House of Lords. He travelled round the world when still a young man, and learned instinctively to take the point of view of a member of the British Commonwealth. He had a vivacious intellect, pleasant manners, ready address, and the knack of remembering what he had to say to any particular person the moment he met him, which is especially valuable to a Minister who, at Foreign

Office receptions or other diplomatic gatherings, has to talk to a succession of politicians, foreign as well as British, on a variety of topics in a short space of time. Typically English in his love of sport, as popular on the Turf as he was in Parliament, he was a great reader, and made a special study of foreign affairs. He was soon to prove himself a writer as well, and an orator of first-rate ability. He became one of Mr Gladstone's most trusted lieutenants, and was appointed by him Foreign Secretary at the age of thirty-nine. He fell with his chief six months later. He returned to Downing Street in 1892, when three short years of office brought to a close his whole political career.

Nor was the briefness of his stay at the Foreign Office in any way due to shortcomings. He fully realised expectations. During his first period, from February to August 1886, the three chief matters with which he had to deal were the coercion of Greece, the dispute with France over the New Hebrides, and the status of Batoum. In each he showed the touch of a master.

Greece, in the words of one of Lord Rosebery's own despatches, had "rushed to arms in a paroxysm of irritation at the possible enlargement of a neighbouring and friendly Christian State (Bulgaria) and made herself . . . the menacing element in the condition of the East;" in other words, because Bulgaria has been enlarged by her union with Eastern Roumelia, Greece decided that she should also enlarge herself at Turkey's expense. A similar idea animated Serbia, who promptly attacked Bulgaria, but was fortunately beaten. She would certainly fight again, however, if Greece came in. It was all-important, therefore, to keep Greece quiet.

The decision to coerce Greece, if necessary, had already been taken by Lord Salisbury, but the Greek Government had shown itself obstinate. When the general election in England brought the Liberals into power with Mr Gladstone, the great Philhellene, at their head, the hopes of the Greeks knew no bounds.

The Mayor of Athens sent him congratulatory telegrams, and the Prime Minister, M. Delyannis, put off replying to Lord Salisbury's last communication. The anti-Greek policy, it was confidently expected, would be reversed. A decided attitude on the part of Greece would, it was supposed, help the British Government. So after a short delay a firm refusal of Lord Salisbury's request to demobilise was returned. A battalion of Evzones was somewhat ostentatiously sent from Athens to the front in Thessaly. A Royal decree summoned 20,000 more men to the colours. Steamers were chartered to serve as transports.[22]

These preparations had quite the opposite effect to that which they were intended to produce. To the not unnatural surprise of the Greeks the Liberal Government's Notes were stiffer than those of Lord Salisbury. More surprising still, their acts were equal to their words. Lord Salisbury had collected an international fleet at Suda Bay under the supreme command of an English admiral. Lord Rosebery brought it to the Piræus. But even this did not convince the malapert Greek Government, which had been most unfortunately emboldened by Russia's withdrawal of her ships from the international fleet. Lord Rosebery hastened to propitiate Russia, at the cost of a slight rectification of the Afghan frontier desired by her, and her vessels returned to their moorings, with the official explanation that they had only left "for the purpose of revictualling."[23] Even then the Greek Government refused to demobilise. Lord Rosebery was asked in the House of Lords whether he could not take stronger measures. He wittily replied that he "did not quite see his way to shelling the Parthenon;" but he saw his way to blockading Greek ports (10th May) and sending an ultimatum to the Government. Greece then capitulated, and a potential Balkan War was averted. Throughout the crisis the lead was taken by Lord Rosebery, and his firm yet delicate handling of the situation gave unity and effect to the action of the Powers.

A sharp quarrel arose with France over the New Hebrides. Into its details we shall not enter; but the French desire to annex the islands was backed by the presence of two men-of-war, which were sent from New Caledonia with a force of 200 infantry and 60 artillerymen. This force actually landed posts at Port Havannah and Port Sandwich, making French recession thereafter very difficult.

England had little objection to France's acquisition of the islands, because the French Government undertook at the same time not to send thither any more convicts; and to rid the Pacific of the convict curse was, the British Government well knew, a prime desire of the whole of Australasia. Lord Rosebery at first, therefore, provisionally agreed to the proposal, but attached the condition that the wishes of the Australian colonies should first be consulted.

This was a consideration which, in the year 1886, reflected great credit on the British Foreign Secretary. Australia, especially Victoria, objected in the strongest possible terms to the absorption of the New Hebrides by France. Lord Rosebery therefore withdrew his consent, and inquired for what purpose the French ironclads were anchored in those harbours? The French Government replied that it had not authorised the expedition. Lord Rosebery was adroit enough to accept the explanation at once, thus making it easier for the vessels to be recalled. He reflected, however, that such enterprising officers as the French naval commanders appeared to be had better be watched, and sent two British warships to the scene.[24] The French attempt to rush the islands was thus defeated, and Britons beyond the seas were given signal proof of the solicitude with which their interests were watched from Downing Street.

In July 1886 the Emperor of Russia abruptly announced his cancellation of Article 69 of the Treaty of Berlin, whereby Batoum had been constituted "an essentially commercial" port. What should Britain do in such a case? The status of Batoum could not

be regarded as of vital importance to Britain; yet its discussion had been very sharp at Berlin between Gortchakoff and the British representatives. Not only that, but was any one Power to be allowed to denounce any clause of a Treaty jointly signed by all? And if Britain championed the sanctity of treaties would she not probably find herself alone in her protest? It was inconceivable that Britain should fight Russia over the status of a Black Sea port. Was a protest in those conditions worth while?

Lord Rosebery decided that it was. He first asked for an explanation. M. de Giers argued that as the original promise to make Batoum a free port had been a spontaneous declaration of the Tsar's, the Tsar had the right to revoke it. Lord Rosebery disagreed. In his despatches to the British Ambassador in St Petersburg he pointed out the gravity of the consequences if Russia alone could declare null one of the principal clauses of the Berlin Treaty; he admitted that British trade at Batoum was very small, and that H.M.'s Government had little or no material interest in the question. He added: "One direct, supreme, and perpetual interest, however, is at stake in this transaction—that of the binding force and sanctity of international engagements. Great Britain is ready at all times and in all seasons to uphold that principle, and she cannot palter with it in the present instance.

"H.M.'s Government cannot, therefore, consent to recognise or associate themselves in any shape or form with this proceeding of the Russian Government. They are compelled to place on record their view that it constitutes a violation of the Treaty of Berlin, unsanctioned by the Signatory Powers, that it tends to make future Conventions of the kind difficult, if not impossible, and to cast doubt at least on those already concluded.

"It must be for the other Powers to judge how far they can acquiesce in this breach of an international engagement. . . ."[25]

The other Powers apparently had no difficulty in

acquiescing. But Lord Rosebery's protest was a vigorous avowal of British preference for honesty and decency in international affairs, and he made no idle threats of a recourse to arms which he knew his country would not sanction.

5.

The success of Lord Rosebery's first tenancy of the Foreign Office was testified by the insistence with which his return to it was demanded when Mr Gladstone formed his last Ministry in 1892. Owing to bad health Lord Rosebery resumed the post with some reluctance; but in the first Cabinet question which arose, his was none the less the deciding voice.

No sooner were the Liberals installed than the Khedive of Egypt, recalling no doubt Mr Gladstone's words about the temporary nature of British occupation, made an attempt to throw off the control of Whitehall. Without consulting the home authorities, he dismissed his Prime Minister and appointed a well-known Anglophobe in his stead. Lord Cromer, the British representative in Cairo, opined that if the appointment were allowed to stand, a wholesale dismissal of British officials would follow, and British administration would be undermined at a stroke. The Foreign Secretary announced that H.M.'s Government expected to be consulted in such important matters as a change of Ministers. The Khedive was stubborn. For twenty-four hours the situation was very critical. Finally the Egyptian ruler, seeing that the British Government were in earnest, expressed his regrets, and cancelled his appointment of the Anglophobe Minister (January 1893).[26]

The incident appears a small one; but it was just such an incident as may provoke a prolonged difficult situation if not dealt with promptly and firmly; and a diplomatist deserves as much credit for small difficulties resolved, for complications forestalled, as for positive achievement.

An amusing epilogue was a visit of the French Ambassador to the Foreign Office. The settlement of Anglo-Egyptian differences was not always entirely welcome to French diplomacy, and on this occasion the Ambassador made a special call in order to lodge a protest against Lord Cromer's protest on the appointment of a Prime Minister by the Khedive, which he described as "a high-handed proceeding." Lord Rosebery answered that "when his Excellency called to mind the express object for which he had sought the present interview, he could hardly contend that a protest was a high-handed proceeding."[26]

The next question which demanded the Foreign Secretary's attention was a clash between Britain and France in Siam. France had certain grievances against the Government of Bangkok, which Lord Rosebery recognised as well-founded. When France, however, in order to enforce her demands, sent gunboats up the river to the Capital, Lord Rosebery insisted that a British war-vessel must also be present to watch over the security of British subjects, who were the most numerous European colony in Siam, and in whose hands three-quarters of the country's foreign trade resided. On 26th July 1893, France declared a blockade, and friendly vessels were given three days to clear. The British naval commander was informed that the blockade arrangements applied to ships of war; and the *Linnet* (the British gunboat) consequently prepared to leave. When he learned of her proposed departure Lord Rosebery telegraphed at once to Bangkok that the British ship was on no account to go, and simultaneously he sent a telegram to the British Ambassador in Paris, requesting him to inform the French Government that it would be impossible "to allow British subjects to be left at the mercy of an unruly Oriental population," and that therefore H.M.'s ship then stationed off the city could not be withdrawn. Lord Rosebery afterwards told an Edinburgh audience that he had risked a war on this occasion. Whether the risk was justified seems

doubtful; it anyhow succeeded in its purpose, for the French Government immediately raised the blockade. Incidentally the influence of Britain in Siam, and throughout Further India, appreciated considerably, and that of France, our bitter rival, was correspondingly depressed.

This factor helped Lord Rosebery in the subsequent negotiations in which France sought to extend her Indo-Chinese territory so as to march with British India. The British Government considered it important to have a buffer State there, in order to prevent the vast expenditure to both countries of having to maintain boundary posts garrisoned by European troops. This point was still unsettled when Lord Rosebery went out of office.

The element of humour was in this case provided by Lord Salisbury. The boundary dispute had dragged on for some years previously, without apparently attracting much interest from Lord Salisbury. The French Foreign Office suggested the river Mekong as a suitable frontier. Salisbury replied that the idea was "worthy of serious examination," and passed it on to the India Office to examine. After three months the French Foreign Office asked whether there was yet any answer to their suggestion. Lord Salisbury replied that he was himself favourable to the proposal, but that he had not yet received the report of the Secretary of State for India, and he added: "As we are still very far from the Mekong, probably my colleague does not consider the question as very urgent." [27]

In the light of history we may conclude that Lord Salisbury's estimate of the importance of the Siamese dispute was juster than Lord Rosebery's; but whereas the former had a reputation for firmness upon which to draw, Lord Rosebery had to dispel the idea that Liberal foreign policy lacked resolution. And if he showed himself a vigorous Foreign Minister, he was a still more vigorous Imperialist. His influence in the Cabinet undoubtedly prevented the abandonment of

Uganda in 1892. Mr Cecil Rhodes, who was privy to the negotiations, declared in a speech six years later that Lord Rosebery had had to "fight the whole Liberal Cabinet" on the question, and that they had had to choose "between remaining in Uganda or parting with Lord Rosebery." Mr Gladstone had relapsed on that occasion to a Little England attitude. "Fancy being dragged into the middle of Africa," he exclaimed to Mr Rhodes, "and, do you know, it is all due to these wretched missionaries. Our burden is too great; as it is, I cannot find the people to govern all our dependencies. We have too much, Mr Rhodes, to do."[28]

Lord Rosebery was ready at all times to risk his own position for the imperialist faith that was in him. But the greatest service which he rendered to his country has still to be recorded. He lifted Foreign Policy out of the factiousness of party, to which it has not since returned. For reversal he substituted continuity. "If there is one thing in my life I should like to live after me," he said at the Albert Hall in 1895, "it is that, when I first went to the Foreign Office as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I argued for and maintained the principle of continuity in foreign administration. My view was this, that whatever our domestic differences may be at home, we should preserve a united front abroad, and that foreign statesmen and foreign courts should feel that they are dealing, not with a ministry, possibly fleeting and possibly transient, but with a great, powerful, and united nation."

Both in 1886 and in 1892 he carried into effect this principle which, adopted and confirmed by Lord Salisbury, has, we may hope, become an axiom of British politics.

# CHAPTER IV

## COLONIAL RIVALRIES. VENEZUELA, 1895. FASHODA, 1898

"Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in
Bear 't that the opposed may beware of thee."

SHAKESPEARE.

### 1.

In Imperial as in Foreign affairs Salisbury and Rosebery relieved each other with as little disturbance to policy as is made in a ship's course by relief of the officer on duty. The acquisitive energy displayed by Rosebery in 1885 and 1892 was maintained by his Conservative counterpart through the intervening years. Neither statesman initiated colonial expansion; neither, probably, wholly relished the business of grabbing territory in order to prevent its being grabbed by rival Powers. But, with France and Germany seizing any unclaimed lands which their governments or their explorers could espy, it appeared to the British Imperialists preferable that at any rate those tracts which were adjacent to existing British territory should come under British rather than another alien administration. Lord Rosebery in 1893 put the matter plainly: "We have to consider what country must be developed either by ourselves or by some other nation, and we have to remember that it is part of our responsibility and heritage to take care that the world, as far as it can be moulded by us, shall receive the Anglo-Saxon, and not another character." Between them the two statesmen in the course of twelve years (1884-1896) brought into Britain's sphere of direct influence just

over two million six hundred thousand square miles of the earth's surface.[1] Forty-five million more individuals came under British rule, and remain, apparently content, under the British flag to-day.

This extension of national responsibilities absorbed only the surplus energy of the British race, and was accomplished without a conflict with any colonising rival. Lord Salisbury always thought of Germans as of a race with whom "by sympathy, by interest, by descent" we ought ever to be friends. Bismarck, on his side, offered him a German alliance in 1887, which Salisbury rejected. He preferred his country to retain complete independence of action; not because he ever considered isolation splendid, but because he believed that in any crisis her influence might then be exercised with greater effect, and that her isolation vanished when every friend of peace rallied to her side.

He held his own against Germany in friendly rivalry, and won the respect of Bismarck.[2] To his successor in the Imperial Chancellorship, Caprivi, he ceded Heligoland in 1890. Heligoland is usually spoken of as one of Lord Salisbury's "graceful concessions"; but the phrase is not accurate, since the Agreement gave Britain an equivalent in the shape of a Protectorate over Zanzibar. The exchange was more criticised in Germany than in England, and it is hardly reasonable to blame Salisbury, as many have done, because twenty-four years later the island became a fortified outpost of our enemy in an unimagined war. The consensus of naval opinion is that Heligoland, if still British in 1914, would not have been worth holding; and a justification of Salisbury's relinquishment of it is that when we had Germany at our mercy and dictated peace to her in 1919 we refrained absolutely from entertaining the thought of reacquiring it, in spite of some expressions of a desire for British rule on the part of the islanders. Lord Salisbury considered that it was natural and proper that an island off the German coast and inhabited by Germans should belong to Germany, and that while Britain's future lay overseas the pre-

dominance of Germany in Europe made for European peace.

He could not judge France as we who have known her since 1904 judge her. Napoleon III.'s reign, still fresh in his memory, had been one of military adventure, ending in the disaster of Sedan. And since the foundation of the Third Republic France had been restless, unstable, and grasping, first cowering before her conquerors and then feverishly anxious to recover her lost prestige by colonial conquests. For ten years she lay under the thumb of Bismarck, and was believed "to have no army worth anything."[3] As soon as she showed signs of renascent energy, Bismarck deftly encouraged her to divert her mind from Alsace and Lorraine by undertaking distant enterprises.[4] She set out on a career of colonial expansion, but her governments, succeeding each other with rapidity, lacked authority, and their action abroad was invalidated by insecurity at home. The failure of France to co-operate with us in Egypt in 1882, which marked the substitution of British for French influence in a country where great captains, great thinkers, and great engineers had made France supreme,[5] was directly attributable to the Premier's lukewarm support by the Chamber of Deputies. France did not feel up to the task; Britain did. In spite of this—or perhaps because of it—Britain's position in Egypt became a constant irritant to the French. Anglophobia was so strong that a proposed official visit of the Prince of Wales to Paris in 1883 had to be abandoned. A few years later a prominent Parisian journalist advocated the seizure of the British Ambassador as hostage for a Frenchman who had disappeared in the Sudan, and the Embassy in the Faubourg St Honoré had to be provided with a special guard. The ubiquitous contact of French and British oversea possessions afforded numberless occasions of friction. Throughout his second Administration (1886-1892) Lord Salisbury was taken up in avoiding serious collisions. The utmost forbearance had to be exercised. "The French are inexplicable,"

Salisbury wrote to his ambassador in Paris in 1887. "One would have thought that under existing circumstances it was not necessary to *make* enemies," and he enumerates the "insults and worries" which their ingenuity was devising.[6] Lord Rosebery had found the same spirit when he was Foreign Secretary in the previous year. "What I want to point out is the apparent animus displayed in these different proceedings. . . . What does it all mean?" "She never loses the opportunity of playing us a trick," he wrote on another occasion.[7]

The period of quivering animosity was followed by a phase of bombastic defiance. Lord Lyons, the Ambassador in Paris, wrote in 1887: "Abject fear of the German armies is being succeeded by overweening confidence in themselves." This mood was personified by the theatrical general Boulanger, militarist and royalist, who became for a while the popular hero of Paris and the provinces. Soldiers on the march or in railway trains sang songs composed in his honour. A sort of delirium seized Paris when he was elected its member for the Chamber of Deputies on 27th January 1889. But his elevation to power unnerved the man. Suddenly, on 1st April, he fled to Brussels. Then the authorities plucked up courage to attack him. He was tried in his absence by the High Court of Justice, and found guilty of conspiracy and misappropriation of public money. The popular idol was metamorphosed into a common rascal. A series of extraordinary scandals, in which the chief of police, politicians, generals, and *intrigantes* played their sordid parts, contributed, with Boulangism, to lower France's prestige. It was not unnatural that Lord Salisbury should have exclaimed that the Latin race was decadent, and have believed that co-operation with stable, vigorous Germany was both more desirable and more likely to conduce to good results. He persisted in his preference to the end of his career, and when in the last year of last century the French Ambassador approached him with the suggestion of a French alliance he answered

that however truly the actual government of France might desire it, he could feel no guarantee that its successors would be of the same mind. The rapidity with which French Foreign Secretaries and French Ambassadors in London succeeded one another made a most unfavourable impression on his mind. In the twenty-five years between 1873 and 1898 the British Foreign Office had twenty-four of the former[8] and twelve of the latter to deal with. Continuity of policy, on which Lord Salisbury set so great a value, was not, if he could help it, once having been placed above the changes of domestic partisanship, to be deposed from security by the caprices of a foreign Assembly.

2.

Throughout his second Administration Lord Salisbury contrived to promote the interests of Britain without any serious complication arising with a foreign Power: during his third Administration (1895 to 1900) the country was twice brought to the very brink of war in their defence. Britain's policy was menaced in 1895 by the United States in Venezuela; and in 1898 by France on the Upper Nile.

A few years before, in 1888, the British Minister in Washington, Sir Lionel Sackville-West, had been dismissed in singular circumstances. In September of that year he received a letter purporting to be written by a British subject, naturalised in the United States, asking his advice as to how he should cast his vote in the forthcoming Presidential election. President Grover Cleveland was seeking re-election; and the unknown correspondent expressed doubts as to whether he should support a politician who had shown such a markedly hostile policy towards Canada. The Ambassador unguardedly replied, stating in general terms that he did not consider that President Cleveland's re-election would do harm to Anglo-American relations. The letter was a political trick.

The impostor who wrote it published the unwary Ambassador's reply to the Press. The advice, insipid though it had been, was clearly a breach of international conventions: a foreign diplomatist had intervened in American domestic affairs. Sackville-West then received two American journalists, and tried to explain the matter away. His explanations were made the material of more partisan propaganda; and his original letter was distributed as a flyleaf in the electoral campaign. The United States Government abruptly delivered him his passports, and he left Washington (30th October 1888).[9]

Lord Salisbury protested against this signal departure from diplomatic amenities, but his protest was ignored. The British Government waited six months, and then quietly appointed a successor in the person of Sir Julian Pauncefote, an urbane lawyer, who set about cultivating good terms with our Trans-Atlantic kinsmen. Lord Rosebery in 1893 raised him to Ambassadorial rank, and thus by a stroke of the pen gratified the Americans and made the British representative chief among the foreign diplomatists. We resumed the attitude of almost exaggerated goodwill which had marked British policy ever since even the "indirect claims" arising out of the Alabama affair had been paid in full without demur. Our friendliness was to meet with a sharp rebuff.

On 7th August 1895 Lord Salisbury must have been astonished to receive a long despatch (covering twelve pages in the Blue Book print) from the United States Secretary of State, Mr Olney. It claimed a direct interest in the boundary dispute between Venezuela and the British Colony of Guiana, which had been dragging on for many years, and which had long since caused a rupture of official diplomatic relations between the South American Republic and the British Empire. Britain had inherited from the Dutch the right to territory up to the watershed of the Orinoco river; but so little tempting were those insalubrious regions that on either side of it only small and scattered groups had

settled. The population growing gradually more dense, however, the need of a definite boundary appeared, and early in 1895 some twenty Venezuelan troops planted their country's flag on a part of the disputed territory and captured a small British outpost which dared to protest. A British schooner was also fired upon by a Venezuelan gunboat. Lord Salisbury was inclined to pay little attention to such incidents as these, and on this occasion his dilatoriness caused an infinity of trouble. For by the time he sent an ultimatum to Venezuela (October 1895) another Presidential election was approaching in the United States, and the Government of Caracas had in the meantime appealed to Washington. President Cleveland, who was now at the head of affairs, saw an opportunity of twisting the British lion's tail.

Mr Olney's long despatch was meant to show that the boundary question fell within the orbit of the Monroe doctrine. It differentiated "Great Britain as a South American State" from Great Britain generally. The Secretary of State asked whether Lord Salisbury would submit the question in its entirety to impartial arbitration, and added that a negative answer would tend to embarrass greatly the future relations between the United States and Great Britain.

The veiled threat left Lord Salisbury imperturbably unhurried. He turned his massive mind to a prolonged and deep study of the whole business. For two months he took no action; then he sent off his ultimatum to Venezuela; and on 26th November he replied to Mr Olney.

He sent him two despatches. In the first he expressed his concurrence in the principle of the Monroe doctrine; the salient phrases of which, for the sake of clarity, may here be quoted: "We owe it, therefore, to candour, and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those Powers (the allied Powers of Europe), to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace

and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European Power we have not interfered, and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence, and maintained it, and whose independence . . . we have acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European Power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States." (President Monroe, Message to Congress, December 1823.)

It was not difficult for Lord Salisbury to show that unless the Monroe principle had been much extended since 1823, Britain's action in no way infringed it; the counter-charge might indeed have been brought, that President Cleveland's intervention in the boundary question was interference with an existing colony of the British Empire, against which his predecessor had expressly bound himself.

Another of Mr Olney's points was easy to controvert. The Secretary of State had gone so far as to pen the following declaration: "That distance and 3000 miles of intervening ocean make any permanent political union between a European and an American State unnatural and inexpedient will hardly be denied." "Her Majesty's Government are prepared emphatically to deny it," wrote Lord Salisbury, "on behalf of both the British and American people who are subject to her Crown." He did not fail to point out that the necessary meaning of Mr Olney's words was that the existing union between Great Britain on the one hand and Canada, Jamaica, Trinidad, Honduras, and Guiana were all "inexpedient and unnatural"—a view which H.M.'s Government were unable to share.

In his second despatch, sent on the same day, Lord Salisbury dealt with the proposal of arbitration. He declined to submit the whole dispute, but agreed to it for certain doubtful territory. He showed that Britain had already repeatedly expressed her readiness to submit to arbitration her claims to large tracts of

auriferous territory there; but she could not agree "to the transfer of large numbers of British subjects, who have for many years enjoyed the rule of a British colony, to a nation of different race and language, whose political system is subject to frequent disturbance, and whose institutions as yet too often afford very inadequate protection to life and property."

Early in December President Cleveland, accompanied by Mr Olney, went on a duck shooting expedition, and he did not hurry his return on the receipt in Washington of Lord Salisbury's replies on 7th December. But when the President came to deliver his Message to Congress on 17th December he showed that his ardour had not been cooled by his sporting expedition. The boundary dispute had reached such a stage, he told his legislators, "as to make it now incumbent upon the United States to take measures to determine with sufficient certainty for its justification what was the true divisional line between the Republic of Venezuela and British Guiana." He proposed that Congress should make an adequate appropriation for the expenses of a Commission which should investigate on the spot and determine the proper boundary line. Then he added—and the sting was in the tail of the message: "When such a report is made and accepted it will, in my opinion, be the duty of the United States to resist by every means in its power, as a wilful aggression upon its rights and interests, the appropriation by Great Britain of any lands . . . which after investigation we have determined of right to belong to Venezuela. In making these recommendations I am fully alive to the full responsibility incurred, and keenly realise all the consequences that may follow. I am, nevertheless, firm in my conviction that, while it is a grievous thing to contemplate the two great English-speaking peoples of the world as being otherwise than friendly competitors in the onward march of civilisation, and strenuous and worthy rivals in all the arts of peace, there is no calamity which a great nation can invite which equals that which follows supine submission to wrong and

injustice and a consequent loss of national self-respect and honour."

This defiant misapplication of a sound principle received hearty applause when the Message was read in Congress, and a large number of members and Senators called at the White House next day to offer their congratulations to the President. Within three days the money was voted, and in the words of an American historian, "All the world was apprised how ready the Congress was to support the President to the very utmost in his new and vigorous assertion of the Monroe doctrine." [10]

For some days the two countries were brought to the verge of war. No other country had before dictated to Britain in this manner. Most Englishmen were exasperated, but few, fortunately, expressed their feelings. Sir H. M. Stanley, indeed, wrote in the *Nineteenth Century* for January 1896 that Americans hated England, and that President Cleveland's message was a "public warning to prepare for war." And the *Annual Register* for 1896 opened with the gloomy words: "It would be necessary to go back many years in the history of Great Britain to find a year which opened so inauspiciously for her as the present . . . worse than the ill-will of the European Powers, of which the causes were not difficult to analyse nor perhaps altogether unreasonable, was the sudden explosion of angry feeling against Great Britain which followed upon President Cleveland's message to Congress."

But the British nation, trustful in Lord Salisbury's sagacity, remained phlegmatic. Nor was the chauvinistic outburst in the States by any means universal. The war-scare had a deplorable effect on business, and brought many sharply back to sobriety. A reaction followed, and the Administration found itself as vigorously assailed as it had been enthusiastically supported. The proposed Commission was criticised as being certain to give needless offence to Britain. The *New York World* considered that the President's

policy was "jingo bugaboo." Its proprietor, Mr Pulitzer, who had met the Prince of Wales on one occasion, took the unconventional course of telegraphing to him to ask for an expression of his views. The Prince drafted a friendly reply; but Lord Salisbury begged him not to transmit it.[11]

He dealt himself with the delicate situation in masterly manner. The American Boundary Commission was already appointed. To demand its dissolution would be to revivify and knit together the dispersed and waning hostile feelings of the American public, and especially of the Congress which had appointed it. On the other hand, to accept the decisions of a foreign body in a dispute which, he maintained, did not concern them, would be to stultify his argument and condone a groundless "meddling and arrogance,"[12] which might become a repeated source of embarrassment in the future. He therefore made no objection to the activities of the American Commission. He even supplied its members with documents with which to further their researches. These gentlemen ransacked the archives of Spain, Holland, Venezuela, and Britain for evidences of territorial rights. They proceeded to the Orinoco district, and made a prolonged study of the boundary question on the spot. But Lord Salisbury regarded their investigations as those of private individuals; and neither he nor the United States Government were concerned with their report, for by the time it was produced a different method of solution had been arranged.

For almost the first time in a major international dispute resort was had to arbitration. Lord Salisbury and Mr Olney arranged for a treaty of arbitration between Venezuela and Britain. "Settled" districts were excluded from its scope; and for the purpose of defining which were settled districts, it was agreed that the same lapse of time — fifty years — should confer the right of sovereignty on the disputant nation as was held to confer unquestionable legal title to

possession on individuals. The actual boundary line was to be decided by a joint Anglo-American Commission with a neutral Chairman. The agreement was finally sealed by treaty on 2nd February 1897, and Professor de Martens, of the Russian Foreign Office, accepted the duties of Chairmanship. How onerous these duties were may be realised by the fact that when the rival Venezuelan and British cases were presented the latter alone filled eight large volumes; and in all 2200 documents in the English, Spanish, and Dutch languages were communicated to the Commission. No wonder that the award tarried. When it was delivered, in October 1899, the chosen frontier coincided with only slight variations from that which Lord Salisbury had originally proposed.

The Governments of the United States and of Britain were both, upon reflection, so disconcerted by the imminence of war, and so favourably impressed by the idea of arbitration, that at the same time when it was arranged for the Venezuelan question they extended the principle to all serious matters of dispute which might arise between them.[13] An Arbitration Treaty was signed on 11th January 1897; but it was rejected by the Senate and never came into force. A year later the American Government flatly declined to arbitrate its quarrel with Spain over Cuba, and war resulted. Lord Salisbury's views on arbitration, embodying the national common-sense, may be recorded: "All the great triumphs in the past have been in substitution of judicial doctrine for the cold, cruel arbitrament of war. We have got rid of private war between small magnate and large magnate in this country; we have got rid of the duel between man and man; and we are slowly, as far as we can, substituting arbitration for struggles in international disputes." He was always ready to cede when cession was not a derogation from national honour or national interests. He gave away a strip of land between Lake Tanganyika and Uganda; he allowed France a free hand in Tunis, and surrendered Siamese territory to the same rival

nation.[14] But when he believed that truly national interests were at stake, he was unyielding as reinforced concrete—as we shall see in the following pages.

## 3.

Two days after his victory at Omdurman, on 4th September 1898, Lord Kitchener ordered a funeral parade to be held outside the ruined Palace of Khartoum for General Gordon, who had there met a hero's death fourteen years before. His lone struggle for civilisation in the Sudan had triumphed; Britain had discharged her debt to his memory; the fanatical barbarism of the Khalifa was destroyed by Kitchener, and slavery and violence made way for justice and security of person.

But the introduction of British civilisation had still to meet a challenge. Hardly had the Highland pipers' funeral dirge died away than intelligence was brought by native steamer down the Nile that white men had been seen many miles higher up the river. To the British soldiers, deep in the desert after two years' arduous advance from Cairo, this was strange news indeed. But Kitchener divined the truth. He knew that a French expedition had started to cross Africa from west to east in the same year as his own army had left Egypt: Major Marchand must have accomplished his purpose, have traversed the swamps and the forests of the Equator, and have reached the upper waters of the Nile.[15] He went forthwith to meet him: and found him at Fashoda (now known as Kodok). Face to face in the heart of Africa the two soldiers championed the rival civilisations of two conquering races of far-away Europe. They neither fought, nor gave away. They left the struggle to be decided between Paris and London.

Such a contingency had been foreseen by the statesmen of those capitals, and the diplomatic battle had been opened three years before by Sir Edward Grey, then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

under Lord Rosebery. Speaking in the House of Commons on 28th March 1895, Sir Edward declared that Britain would view a French advance into the Nile Valley as an "unfriendly act." This unequivocal pronouncement was endorsed by the succeeding Salisbury Administration. Lord Salisbury so clearly foresaw the coming struggle that he made definite advances to M. Léon Bourgeois for an Upper Nile settlement in 1896.[16] The French Government had received the news of the occupation of Khartoum without much enthusiasm. Their Foreign Minister, M. Delcassé, congratulated the British Ambassador in Paris, but added that the British army would probably meet a French "emissary of civilisation," with whom he trusted they would not come to blows. A few days later Lord Salisbury instructed Sir Edmund Monson, his ambassador in Paris, to inform M. Delcassé in the most explicit terms, that "by the military events of last week all the territories which were subject to the Khalifa passed by right of conquest to the British and Egyptian Governments:" Her Majesty's Government did not consider that this right was open to discussion. The Quai d'Orsay, however, were by no means of this opinion. M. Delcassé argued that France was simply engaged from the south and west in the same undertaking as Britain from the north. Sir E. Monson, acting on Lord Salisbury's instructions, refused to compromise, and requested the withdrawal of Major Marchand from Fashoda. M. Delcassé said that the French Government, before coming to any decision, would like to have the Major's report before them. Sir Edmund thereupon asked him point-blank whether the French Government refused to recall M. Marchand before receiving his report. M. Delcassé "considered his reply for some minutes," in the words of the Ambassador's despatch; and ultimately said that he himself was ready to discuss the question in the most conciliatory spirit, but that Sir Edmund should not "ask him for the impossible."

In London the French Ambassador, Baron de

Courcel, saw Lord Salisbury on two occasions. He tried very skilfully to merge the solution of the Fashoda incident in a general Central African settlement. Lord Salisbury, however, considered that the situation had been quite changed by the victory of Omdurman, and was not prepared to revert to his 1896 proposal; and in his interview with M. de Courcel he appears to have been quite uncompromising, and to have insisted upon the withdrawal of Marchand before the larger question could be discussed.[17] Baron de Courcel stated that the object of the French Government was to have an outlet to the Nile for their Ubanghi province (in Central Africa); any such proposals, Lord Salisbury had replied, could not be discussed at the moment, but should be made in a written form, in such a way that they might be submitted to the Cabinet. "The extreme indefiniteness of his language and the rhetorical character he gave to it by the great earnestness with which he addressed himself to the subject, made it impossible for me to express or to form any definite opinion upon the various propositions which he seemed to desire to convey. . . ." so wrote Lord Salisbury. But to one proposition he answered categorically enough. He had referred to the physical difficulties of M. Marchand's position, and remarked that it was impossible for the gallant explorer to get away except by the northern route, which was under British control. The French Ambassador "traversed this assertion, and said that M. Marchand could perfectly retreat by the west." Whereupon Lord Salisbury rejoined that "we offered no sort of impediment to his doing so."

The French case was logically as good as the British. On what basis was a British claim to the Fashoda district better than France's? France had got there first, and hoisted the Tricolour flag. A flag, as Lord Rosebery remarked in a speech made during the controversy, was no doubt "a portable affair"; but considering the number of provinces and islands which we had acquired the world over by the very process of implanting a flag, Lord Rosebery's argument appeared

to be only the last quibble of a perfidious race of hypocrites, and feeling in Paris, already at high temperature, rose to fever-pitch. Lord Kitchener was cited in British arguments as an Egyptian general, servant of the Khedive; then why, asked the French Ambassador, were the negotiations conducted by the British Prime Minister? But if the logic of reason was against us, the logic of facts was in our favour. The Nile was Egypt, and Egypt was the Nile, as Lord Rosebery also pointed out: Egypt was in British hands; and whatever the French Ambassador might say in London, Marchand himself showed no inclination to return from Fashoda by the way that he had arrived. He was isolated in the heart of Africa with a small detachment of brave men, who were dependent for supplies and for security upon the British army. Lord Salisbury, taking this knowledge as his base, challenged absolutely the right of France to annex Fashoda. Throughout the negotiations his language was rigidly consistent. M. Marchand was "a French explorer who is on the Upper Nile in a difficult position;" his "expedition with an escort of 100 Senegalese troops has no political effect;" M. Marchand had been alluded to by M. Delcassé as an "emissary of civilisation," and by no expression or implication did Lord Salisbury admit the explorer to be vested in any other guise. M. Delcassé's cautious attitude was distasteful to the rest of his Cabinet, and was repudiated by unofficial France. Major Marchand's cause was very hotly taken up on the boulevards. Moreover, his expedition had been equipped in secret, but officially, in 1896; he had been expressly charged by his immediate superior, M. Liotard, to occupy Fashoda and hoist the French flag there, as he himself explained to Lord Kitchener in their memorable interview on the spot. Not only that; the French Government had simultaneously equipped an expedition under an Orleans prince to start from Abyssinia, and penetrate to Fashoda from the east. The hostility of southern Abyssinian tribes thwarted the design. Had this small band of explorers

shown the same courage and determination as Marchand, and joined hands with him at Fashoda, it would almost certainly have become a point of honour with the French nation that there should be no retreat : a band of French territory would have been established across Africa from French Congo to the Red Sea, which would have lain athwart a British line from the Cape to Cairo ; and the Power which controlled Egypt would not have controlled the sources of Egypt's fertility. Stripped of accessories the struggle was one for the predominance of Britain or France in Central Africa ; and the struggle was decided, as so many colonial questions between the two nations have been decided, by the superior support accorded to the man on the spot by British statesmanship.

Lord Salisbury took the bold and unusual step of publishing papers during the progress of the negotiations. On 10th October, within a fortnight of the news of the Fashoda meeting, and again at the end of the month, all the despatches on the subject were issued to the public ; and the public responded to the trust thus reposed in them by a remarkably unanimous support of the Government. Even warlike preparations, such as the formation of a strong reserve Squadron in the Channel, met with little criticism. Newspapers of Radical opinions approved the strong and direct course which the despatches showed the Government to be pursuing. Prominent Liberal politicians gave their support without stint. Lord Rosebery took the lead in this respect in a great speech at Epsom. One passage deserves record as being of permanent interest and value : "Great Britain has been treated rather too much as what the French call a negligible quantity in recent periods," he said ; "Great Britain has been conciliatory, and her conciliatory disposition has been widely misunderstood. If the nations of the world are under the impression that the ancient spirit of Great Britain is dead, or that her resources are weakened, or her population less determined than ever it was to maintain the rights and the honour of its flag, they make a mistake which can only end in a disastrous

conflagration"—prophetic words, the truth of which was unfortunately not appreciated by the man who had just been serving as Lord Rosebery's own immediate subordinate.

The public was afforded the opportunity of giving expression to its feelings by the return of the victor of Omdurman. Lord Kitchener arrived at Dover on 27th October. He was received both there and in London with unsurpassed enthusiasm. On 4th November, exactly two months after his tribute to General Gordon at Khartoum, he was entertained at the Guildhall and presented with the freedom of the City. Lord Salisbury was present, and in his speech announced the settlement of the dispute with France. He introduced the announcement, for which the country was waiting with anxious expectation, casually into the middle of his remarks. "I received from the French Ambassador this afternoon," he said, "the information that the French Government had come to the conclusion that the occupation of Fashoda was of no sort of value to the French Republic, and they thought that . . . to persist in an occupation which only cost them money and did them harm, merely because some people . . . thought it might be disagreeable to an unwelcome neighbour, would not show the wisdom with which, I think, the French Republic has been uniformly guided, and they have done what I believe many other governments would have done in the same position—they have resolved that the occupation must cease."

These conciliatory words ended six weeks' keen diplomatic warfare between the two nations with the complete triumph of Britain. Lord Salisbury's victory had repercussions in the most distant spheres: it brought advantages to Englishmen, and gave effect to British views of what was just and expedient, in places so separate as China and Crete. The worth of prestige in diplomacy was exemplified when the Peking Government, *post hoc et propter hoc*, withdrew its opposition to certain British industrial and commercial undertakings, which had been obstructed by them at the instigation

of French competitive interests: and the favour shown to our rivals was transferred to us.[18] In Crete the British admiral could take the lead unembarrassed by the jealous misgivings of his colleagues representing France, Italy, and Russia; with the beneficent consequence that by November every Turkish soldier was removed from the island, and the Christian inhabitants, under a Greek High Commissioner, were enabled to work out their salvation in comparative immunity, and prepare the way for the union with Greece, which the bulk of the inhabitants desired, and which has since been consummated.

The close of the Fashoda incident marks, perhaps, the zenith of Lord Salisbury's fame at home and abroad. At the beginning of this, his third Administration, there had been a tendency in public opinion to regard him as having grown rather supine—indifferent to progress at home, interested almost exclusively in foreign affairs, and even there easy-going. By-elections had begun to go against him. In August 1898 the Government received a notable set-back in Lancashire, where its defeat at Southport was attributed by both victor and vanquished to the timidity of Lord Salisbury's policy in China. Russia and France had both scored successes at the expense of British finance; and our commerce in the Far East, a matter of direct interest to Lancashire operatives, seemed destined to suffer in consequence. It was easy for the Radical candidate to criticise Lord Salisbury's lack of success: it was more difficult to say what exactly he ought to have done. His method always seems to have been to make up his mind beforehand whether it would, in case of need, be worth while going to war to gain his point. He had a horror of bluff. If he was prepared to fight, he was iron-firm. If he was not prepared to fight, he was excessively conciliatory. He had clearly decided that it was not worth while having a war with France or Russia, or both, over concessions in China—and he adapted his diplomacy to this decision.

He may have been tainted with a chauvinistic

spirit in 1878; but as the country became more jingoistic he became less. At the Lord Mayor's banquet held at the Guildhall on 9th November 1898, five days after the Fashoda settlement, the moderation of his imperialism was thrown into strong relief. He said that many people were anticipating great results abroad from the recent successes in foreign policy: some people would say, he continued, that we intended to seize Syria or to occupy Crete, "and a third view is that we intend to declare a protectorate of Egypt." As these words were spoken, there was a burst of prolonged applause, which took the Prime Minister aback. "It is quite clear," he exclaimed, "if some of my audience were at the head of affairs what would be done. But I am sorry to say that for the present I cannot rise to the height of their aspirations." The Boer War, which came a year later, was not of his seeking. He regarded it as a regrettable necessity. The struggle between Dutch and British would probably not have developed into an armed conflict if President Krüger had allowed political liberty to the Outlanders of the Transvaal: Lord Salisbury had settled one colonial conflict after another to the advantage of Britain without having recourse to the arbitrament of war; but his diplomacy broke on the rock of Dutch obstinacy.

The more proper and only probable causes of future wars which he foresaw were proclaimed in the Guildhall speech from which we have already quoted: "You see nations who are decaying," he said, "whose Government is so bad that they can neither maintain the power of self-defence nor the affection of their subjects . . . there are always neighbours who are impelled by some motive or other—it may be from the highest philanthropy, it may be from the natural desire of empire—are always inclined or disposed to contest with each other as to who shall be the heir of the nation that is falling away from its own position. And that is the cause of war." The same sentiment appears in another speech spoken in the same year: "The living nations will gradually encroach on the

territory of the dying, and the seeds and causes of conflict among civilised nations will speedily appear" (Albert Hall, 4th May 1898).

When a few years later this strong, steadfast Englishman passed away, it seemed in vision to some of his countrymen as if a great piece of the white chalk cliffs of Dover, that have so long stood sentry over England, had crumbled and disappeared into the sea. England felt the smaller for his loss. Some of his utterances seem now to belong to a bygone age. But individual performance must be measured in the setting of its times. Political achievement results from the apt utilisation of means and methods, motives and opportunities; these differ in any epoch from every other, and to these, in some degree, the statesman must conform. As flowers form the beauty of the garden where best they can grow, so great men make the glory of the age from which they derive their characteristics. The Victorian age was one of fine achievement in many spheres; and Lord Salisbury will always remain one of its great outstanding figures.

# APPENDIX

The figures in brackets refer to the pages of this book.

## CHAPTER I

1. Clive Bigham, *Prime Ministers of Britain*, 1721-1921, p. 348.
2. Sir George Trevelyan, *George III. and Charles Fox*, vol. ii., p. 377. From the union of Charles II. and his high-born French mistress, Louise de Querouailles, several other distinguished men have descended. (p. 4.)
3. Lady Gwendolen Cecil, *Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. ii., p. 6.
4. *Essays on Foreign Politics*, pp. 25 and 58. It must in justice be noted that he wrote elsewhere: "An independent Poland will become a possibility when individual Polish leaders shall have shown that they have acquired the moral capacity for self-renunciation." (p. 9.)
5. *Biographical Essays*, pp. 25, 46, 52, 21 and 22.
6. *Essays on Foreign Politics*, p. 148.
7. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., pp. 34-36.
8. *New Chapters of Bismarck's Autobiography*, p. 288.
9. Lord Eversley, *The Turkish Empire*, pp. 379 and 318-320, and Miller, *The Balkans*, pp. 300-302.
10. See Miss Elliot's Introduction to Sir Henry Elliot's Memoirs, published as *Some Revolutions and Other Experiences*, in 1922.
11. Sir Spencer Walpole, *History of Twenty-five Years*, vol. iv., pp. 100 and 101.
12. It is interesting to observe that this phrase was actually first used by Stratford Canning, in a letter written to George Canning, in 1821. Afterwards, as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, he became the great, though stern and just, friend of the Turks. See his *Life*, by Lane Poole, vol. i., pp. 307 and 345. (p. 14.)
13. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., p. 94.

## CHAPTER II

1. Pera is the European quarter of Constantinople, as Stamboul is the Turkish. Galata is the port.
2. Sir Henry Elliot, *Diplomatic Recollections*, p. 283.
3. Lord Eversley, *The Turkish Empire: its Growth and Decay*, p. 317.
4. Elliot, pp. 344, and 388-390.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 391.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 392.
7. Lady Gwendolen Cecil, *Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. ii., pp. 118, 119.
8. Elliot, pp. 365 and 397-407.
9. Sir Spencer Walpole, *History of Twenty-five Years*, vol. iv., p. 128.
10. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., pp. 123 and 127.
11. J. M'Carthy, *Short History of Our Own Times*, p. 411.
12. Spencer Walpole, vol. iv., pp. 124-127; Parliamentary Papers, 1877 (Nos. 1 and 2).
13. Mr Layard had long resided in the East and had many Turkish friends. He had won fame by his excavations at Nineveh.
14. Holland Rose, *Development of the European Nations* (1870-1914), pp. 231 and passim in chapter ix.
15. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., p. 226, and Lord Rosebery, *Miscellanies*, vol. i., p. 273.
16. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., p. 103.
17. Lord Newton, *Life of Lord Lyons*, p. 369.
18. Miller, *The Balkans*, pp. 215-221, and Holland Rose, pp. 254 and 255.
19. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., p. 295, and Buckle, *Life of Disraeli* vol. vi., p. 323.
20. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., pp. 264 and 271.
21. M'Carthy, pp. 420 and 421.
22. Buckle, vol. vi., p. 324.
23. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., p. 292, and Buckle, vol. vi., p. 323.
24. Bismarck had a story how, when the Batoum fortifications question came before the Congress, Beaconsfield began to mutter excitedly, "casus belli, casus belli." Owing to the difference between British and Continental pronunciation of Latin nobody realised what he meant, except Bismarck—whom, however, it suited also not to understand. The story

is told by Baron von Eckhardstein in *Ten Years at the Court of St James's.*

25. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., pp. 292, 293, and 294, 295.
26. Princess Radziwill, *My Recollections*, p. 149.
27. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., p. 307.
28. Holland Rose, pp. 241 and 245.
29. Buckle, vol. vi., p. 312.

## CHAPTER III

1. Sir Henry Elliot, *Diplomatic Recollections*, p. 366.
2. Lady Gwendolen Cecil, *Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. ii., pp. 286 and 288.
3. J. M'Carthy, *Short History of Our Own Times*, p. 424.
4. Elliot, p. 410.
5. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., p. 302.
6. Lémonon, *L'Europe et la Politique Britannique*, p. 74.
7. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., p. 381.
8. *Selected Speeches on Foreign Policy*, pp. 371-374.
9. Lord Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii., p. 41.
10. E. T. Cook, "Mr Gladstone as Foreign Minister, *Monthly Review*, November 1903.
11. Lémonon, p. 47.
12. Holland Rose, *Development of the European Nations*, p. 523.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 516; Parliamentary Papers, Africa, 1886 (No. 1).
14. *Ibid.*, p. 518.
15. Lémonon, p. 42. Translation: "Everywhere she came up against England, who with Salisbury (1886) had been caught up again by Imperialist fever. Home politics had become one of the least of the Government's cares." (p. 52.)
16. Holland Rose, p. 425.
17. Robinson, *History of England*, pp. 682 and 685.
18. Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii., p. 72.
19. Lady G. Cecil, vol. ii., p. 326.
20. Speech at Birmingham, 29th October 1888.
21. E. T. Cook, *Monthly Review*, November 1903.
22. Sir Horace Rumbold, *Final Recollections of a Diplomatist*, pp. 77-80. Sir Horace Rumbold was British Minister in Athens at the time, and greatly contributed to the success of British policy by the skill with which he led the local concerted action of the Powers.

23. E. T. Cook, *The Foreign Policy of Lord Rosebery*, p. 8.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-15.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-18.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-28.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-50.
28. Speech by Mr Rhodes on 25th October 1898, quoted by Cook, p. 32.

## CHAPTER IV

General Reference—*Annual Register*, 1890, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898.

1. Mee, *Lord Salisbury*, p. 49; E. T. Cook, *Foreign Policy of Lord Rosebery*, p. 83.
2. The apothegm that Lord Salisbury was "a lath painted to look like iron" has been wrongly attributed to Bismarck. It was really an expression used by the Italian diplomatist, Count Corti. Mee and Charles Lowe in *Nineteenth Century and After*, for February 1922. (p. 67.)
3. See Saxon Mills, *Life of E. T. Cook*, p. 88.
4. Lord Newton, *Life of Lord Lyons*, p. 444.
5. Holland Rose, p. 453.
6. Lord Newton, pp. 483, 512, and 532.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 515, 524.
8. That is to say, there were twenty-four changes. The same gentlemen sometimes returned at intervals to their former post. (p. 70.)
9. In justice to the United States Government it should perhaps be stated that the British Minister's mode of life had given rise to much expostulation in American official society (p. 71.)
10. Professor Woodrow Wilson (afterwards President of the United States), *History of the American People*, p. 247.
11. Sir Sidney Lee, Article on King Edward in *The Times* of 20th July 1921.
12. These are the American writer Mr Owen Wister's words in *A Straight Deal or the Ancient Grudge*, p. 127. (p. 76.)
13. The origination of this treaty is claimed by both parties. See Woodrow Wilson, p. 248, and Mee, p. 61. (p. 77.)
14. Mee, p. 47.
15. Holland Rose, pp. 501-504.
16. R. de Caix, *La Politique Anglaise*. M. Bourgeois was at the moment (March to April 1896) French Minister for Foreign Affairs. (p. 79.)

17. There is discrepancy on this point between the French and British official accounts. The conversation took place, with no third person present, on 12th October. Baron de Courcel reported to Paris that "Lord Salisbury urged him strongly" to formulate proposals for a general settlement, in contradiction to Lord Salisbury's own account of the interview to Sir E. Monson. The fallibility of human memory might easily, it seems, lead to rather serious divergences when two controversialists have no shorthand writer to rely upon for an accurate record of the words used on a series of points raised in the course of a prolonged discussion. A similar difficulty arose in the case of a conversation between Lord Salisbury and the German Kaiser at Cowes in 1895. (p. 80.)
18. Lémonon, p. 149.

# PART II

## THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE, K.G.

*H.M.'s Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 12th November 1900 to 11th December 1905.*

## Sir EDWARD GREY, Bart., later VISCOUNT GREY OF FALLODON, K.G.

*H.M.'s Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 11th December 1905 to 11th December 1916.*

# CHAPTER I

## THE ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE

"A people's heart restrained too sternly
May overflow and burst all barriers,
As the heart of a river overflowing
Swells and sweeps away all boundaries."

*Translated from the Japanese of*
*H.I.M. the Empress by* CLARA WALSH.

### 1.

LORD SALISBURY'S successor sprang from the same "ruling classes" which are now submerged. Lansdownes have been Ministers of the Crown or Leaders of the Opposition since 1763. Their country seat, Bowood, is one of the most beautiful in the West Country. But the late Foreign Minister has not been able to spend much time in looking after his 143,000 acres. From the age of twenty-three, when Mr Gladstone made him a Commissioner of the Exchequer, his life has been spent in the direct service of his country — in succession as Under-Secretary for War, Under-Secretary for India, Governor-General of Canada, Viceroy of India, War Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs. When Lord Salisbury called him to the Foreign Office he was serving at the War Office, where he had, by common consent, been a failure. Our usual unpreparedness for war was never so palpable as during the early days of the struggle with the small Boer Republics in 1899; and the blame was fastened on Lord Lansdowne. This transfer to the Foreign Office, therefore, on 1st November 1900, provoked the most violent criticism and even a call for his impeachment. Lord

Salisbury was unmoved by the public indignation. He remembered the case of Lord Castlereagh. He reflected that after failing conspicuously at the War Office that statesman had been one of our most successful Foreign Secretaries. He knew that the breadth of political vision which the conduct of foreign affairs demands is seldom found in conjunction with the skilful administration required by the head of the War Office. The successes of a diplomatist are not of a spectacular sort. They consist in minor advantages gained at long intervals, some by the exercise of extreme caution, others by boldness. They derive from a wise concession at one moment, from far-sighted persistence at another; they demand sleepless tact, immovable calmness, and patience that no folly, no provocation, and no blunders can shake.[1] Diplomacy, with its close attention to correctness of form and its delicate adjustment of psychological antagonisms, is essentially a French art, and French blood runs in the veins of Lord Lansdowne, for his mother was the daughter of a French Ambassador to the Court of St James's. His physiognomy shows none of the John Bull directness of his predecessor; but he has the simple delicacy, the refinement, and the exquisite manners of a grand seigneur, which won him the love and the respect of the foreign plenipotentiaries in London from the moment of his advent to the Foreign Department, and made his dealings with them easy throughout his tenure of office.

Lord Lansdowne's strength lay most of all in his capacity to subordinate his own desire for fame to his sense of public service. He took counsel with his principal subordinates, Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, Sir Thomas Sanderson, Sir William Tyrrell, and Sir Eyre Crowe. He had an inborn flair for foreign politics, and with due regard for public opinion he then formed his own conclusion and implemented their expert advice. He would stake his reputation upon the policy he adopted. He readily assumed responsibility. Quietly but completely he broke our tradition

of "splendid isolation." He signed the Entente with France in 1904. In 1902 he concluded a treaty with Japan—the first alliance of its sort which Britain had made in peace-time for over 500 years. To find a parallel we must go back to the Treaty of "Friendship and Alliance" which we signed with Portugal in 1373.

2.

The first important matter to which the attention of the new Foreign Minister was directed was the growing enmity of Russia and Japan, which threatened serious complications prejudicial to British interests in the Far East.

In 1898 Port Arthur, on the Liao-Tung peninsula, between Korea and the northern Chinese mainland, had been leased, under pressure, to Russia by China; and this transaction, which in another of its articles sanctioned the dominating position of Japan in Korea, raised a storm of popular disgust both in China and Japan. The unfortunate Chinese signatory was forced to abandon his diplomatic career. Another important official who shared his responsibility was exiled into the interior of China and throttled. The Imperial Ambassador in St Petersburg, who had not actively enough opposed the policy of his own Government, was recalled, and suffered a public execution in Peking. In Japan the cession of the ice-free port to her great rival roused equally hostile sentiments, which, however, took on a more rational form of expression. Feeling their own helplessness, the Mikado's Government looked about for a powerful friend. They were unlikely to seek an alliance in either France or Germany; for when this same valuable harbour had been wrested from China by Japan in a successful war in 1895, those two Western Powers had combined with Russia to compel Japan to restore it to her beaten enemy. But Britain had then refused to associate herself with their policy; so to Britain the island Empire of the East now naturally turned.

Britain, moreover, was not only Russia's principal rival in the Far East; she was her traditional enemy in Europe and in Asia alike. For nearly a hundred years she had opposed a policy that was vague and haphazard in its methods, but subconsciously persistent in its aim. For the greater part of the nineteenth century the great northern Empire had been groping southward for a warm-water port, and in the Black Sea and in the Persian Gulf had come up against the blank wall of British opposition. Britain had also blocked her progress towards India. Now, like a sea-lion turned from his course by a dam of ice across his path, the colossus swung to the East bent upon the same quest.

Unforfending and uncalculating, Slavonic Russia seldom or never has a definable policy based on the popular will. The northern Slavs are an imaginative folk moved by mystic impulse rather than by reason. They do not deliberately frame a policy; they seem incapable of planning or organising for the future. They do not as a nation reckon the pros and cons of conduct. They plunge, and they often plunge blindly, at the bidding of feckless political gamblers, who frequently are not themselves pure Slavs. Most of the characters who have shown a capacity for organisation in Russian history will be found to have carried a stiffening element of Tartar, German, or Jewish composition. Count Witte, himself of Teutonic or Dutch extraction, and one of the ablest Finance Ministers produced by Russia, relates how, about the time of which we are speaking, the celebrated Russian scientist Mendeleyeff, was seriously urging on him the advisability of opening a route to the Far East across the North Pole by means of ice-breakers! Similarly moved to grope eastward by an all-pervading impulse, General Kuropatkin, hearing news of a minor disturbance in Manchuria, at once despatched forces from European Russia quite disproportionate in number to the gravity of the disturbance. The troops arrived several weeks after the riots had been quelled by Russian soldiers on the spot, and they were re-embarked

on their return journey of four and a half thousand miles as soon as they arrived at their destination.[2] Recent Russian Tsars seem to have been steeped in Slav mutability and to have been congenitally infirm of purpose. As a British diplomatist[3] found when we had difficulties with Russia over the Afghan frontier in 1883, so Count Witte found in 1901 that the Emperor's decision varied according to the last Minister to whose suasion he had listened; and on the question of a forward or a conciliatory policy in Manchuria the Emperor Nicolas' orders contradicted each other for eighteen consecutive months.

The advocates of aggression finally gained the day by the cleverness of General Kuropatkin and of a certain cavalry officer named Bezobrazoff. The General learned by heart jokes and stories from the writer Turgeneff with which to ply the Tsarina; and after winning her good humour expounded to her his projects, well knowing that if he had his way with her he would have his way with the Tsar. Captain Bezobrazoff managed to interest his Imperial master in schemes for the exploitation of Korea, and acquired great influence in Russian politics. This adventurous officer was given the rank of Secretary of State; and proceeded in his new capacity to promote an organisation not usually associated with Cabinet Ministers, namely, a force of Chinese robber bands which "guarded" his interests and those of his associate, General Alexeieff, in the Yalu basin and in Korea, and which speedily came into collision with the Chinese authorities.[4]

Seldom have two adversaries more opposite in national characteristics found themselves face to face than the Russians and the Japanese. This Eastern island race had only a few years before emerged from the twilight of barbarism. Japan was hardly discovered when in 1864 a British admiral bombarded and set fire to the coastal town of Kagosima because an English merchant had been murdered, and the Japanese authorities, in spite of their utmost endeavours, had failed to

find the murderer. The admiral, moreover, according to the official report, bade the Japanese remember that he was dealing "not with a civilised people, but with barbarians." Sir Harry Parkes, too, one of the first diplomatists to represent Britain in Tokyo, and who had earlier in his career suffered torture at the hands of the Chinese, adopted a tone in his dealings with the people to whom he had now been accredited more hectoring than that which Englishmen usually employ to conquered savages. The Japanese showed their mettle and their intelligence by deciding as quickly as possible to study the methods of Westerners which had created for them their temporary superiority. With a love of innovation and an aptitude for selective imitation unique in orientals, they rapidly transformed themselves into an efficient State; and in 1894 the British Government under Lord Rosebery surrendered the ex-territorial rights of British subjects, and thereby recognised Japan as a civilised State. For the first time the fortunes of Europeans were submitted to the jurisdiction of an oriental Power.[5]

But despite their progress to modernity the Japanese have kept most of the attributes and traditions of their ancient faith. Their Buddhism has inculcated habits of perseverance and self-control, so singularly lacking in their opponent Slavs. Native shrewdness, foresight, and care in calculation render them as apt at organisation as the Russians are inept, and make their diplomacy as purposeful as the Russians' is uncertain. Courage, even to contempt of death, is taught them from an early age; veneration for their ancestors produces a great sense of discipline. The Emperor is held to be descended from the gods, therefore Japan is by destiny superior to all other nations. Oriental stoicism remains, and cunning, a skill in dissembling, a pertinacity of revenge, an unfailing smoothness of manner which makes them brilliant and unscrupulous adepts of the diplomatic craft.

3.

Such were the nations facing one another in the Far East; and one of them came to Lord Lansdowne soon after his accession to office, with a formal request for an alliance. Britain's commercial commitments in Far Eastern countries were greater than those of any other Power. Our primary interest, commercial and political, was the preservation of peace and the maintenance of China's territorial integrity, with fair trade for all nations who were her customers. If, as seemed probable, a conflict were to break out between Russia and Japan on the northern confines of China, our purpose would be to prevent its extension.

China's independence had indubitably been threatened by Russia, who was therein abetted by Germany, since 1900; and Lord Lansdowne, like most Englishmen, was under the influence of an anti-Russian bias. He was therefore predisposed to view with favour the idea of an Anglo-Japanese understanding. His inclination received a powerful impulse from a consideration which his naval advisers pressed upon him. The "two-Power naval standard," which had been adopted as an axiom of British policy, was becoming in 1901 increasingly difficult to maintain in the several seas of the world; and the Admiralty naturally considered that Japan as a definite ally in the Far East could most materially contribute to its maintenance in the Pacific. Lord Lansdowne appreciated the force of the argument. He was not a man to rush into action; but the indiscretion of a subordinate diplomatist was destined to hasten a decision which his natural caution might have considerably delayed.

In the summer of that year the British Minister in Tokyo, Sir Claude MacDonald, came home on leave of absence.[6] While in London he took the opportunity to discuss with Lord Salisbury, of whom he was a personal friend, and with other personages, the question which was naturally uppermost in his mind. Calling one day upon Count Hayashi, the Japanese Minister in London,

he mentioned to him that he had seen both King Edward and Lord Salisbury, and that both approved in principle the idea of an alliance with Japan; but that, such an alliance being a departure from British traditions of foreign policy, it might take some time to negotiate, and "Lord Salisbury was a little afraid that in the delay Japan and Russia might form an alliance." It was a *lapsus linguæ* to repeat this fear of Lord Salisbury's. For a diplomatist a word slipped out inadvertently is like the missed catch to a cricketer, whereby a fieldsman gives a life to the batsman which may have incalculable consequences. Count Hayashi took full advantage of the British diplomat's blunder. Delay would not suit him. He expected a war with Russia before very long, and wanted the alliance first. It was most important for Japan that the ring should be kept clear. Russia was allied to France by a treaty, the terms of which were secret. It was not probable that France would be inclined to come to the help of Russia in a Far Eastern matter. Her disinclination would certainly be augmented if such action were likely to involve her in a struggle with Britain. The Japanese diplomatist therefore used the Russian bogey to its fullest extent. Whenever the negotiations flagged he hinted that it might after all be better for the Japanese to compose their quarrel over Manchuria and come to some accommodation with their rival. The Tokyo Government cleverly supported their representative. They allowed an important statesman with Russian proclivities, the Marquis Ito, to go on a "mission of conciliation" to St Petersburg. There existed a small political clique behind the Marquis who would have been genuinely pleased to come to an understanding with Russia. But the Government of the Mikado would very much prefer an alliance with the world's greatest sea-Power. It would give Japan a big advance in the society of nations; it would, they foresaw, give her pre-eminence among the Eastern races and make her their champion in the councils of Europe. Count Hayashi was therefore authorised to inform

Lord Lansdowne that Japan must make an alliance with either Russia or Britain; and to add that she preferred Britain, because her policy, like ours, was to maintain China's territorial integrity and to keep the door of that country open to the trade of all countries.

4.

Lord Lansdowne was impressed by the reasoning of Count Hayashi, and believing that British interests would thereby be as well served as those of Japan he signed a Treaty of Alliance on 30th January 1902.

In his covering despatch he stated that the Agreement was the outcome of the events of the last two years in the Far East, in which British and Japanese policy had been "actuated by the same views." According to the preamble its chief purpose was "to maintain the *status quo* and general peace in the extreme East"; the "special interests" of the contracting nations in China and Korea were recognised; the independence of those countries was guaranteed, and "equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations" was to be secured. By Article III. either Power undertook, in the event of its ally being attacked by more than one Power, to come to its assistance. The Treaty was to remain in force for five years; but if either ally at the conclusion of that period were actually engaged in war, the validity of the Agreement automatically continued until the conclusion of peace.

The expected happened, and within two years of the Treaty's inception war broke out between Russia and Japan. The smaller nation was victorious, to the surprise of the British public. Lord Lansdowne's bold policy, based on expert knowledge,[7] had enabled us to back the winner.

5.

While the Russo-Japanese War was still in progress, a new Treaty (12th August 1905) was substituted for the original Agreement. By the second Instrument we were bound more closely to Japan than by the first;

for by its second Article, if either party were henceforth to be attacked by any single Power without provocation, the other was bound to join in the struggle. In his covering despatch to the British Ambassadors in Paris and St Petersburg, Lord Lansdowne did not, perhaps naturally, lay particular stress upon this point. The whole negotiation was kept very secret; and this clause was certainly not calculated to please an electorate whose favours were about to be sought in a general election, and which had already given manifold indications of an intention to dismiss the Government of which Lord Lansdowne was a member.

In Article III. of the new Agreement, we reversed the policy of the 1902 Treaty; adapting our policy to accomplished facts, we now recognised Japan's dominion over Korea. In the Treaty of Portsmouth (U.S.A.) which closed the Far Eastern War in September 1905, Russia conceded this point to Japan; so it was obviously not the part of Japan's ally to challenge it; and we had, moreover, in Article I. of the earlier Treaty, already recognised Japan's special interests in that now defunct Empire.

Another new feature was the inclusion of India in the Treaty. If Britain were to become involved in war, in defence of her special interests or territorial rights on the Indian frontier, Japan was to come to her assistance. This rather astonishing clause was probably inserted in support of the forward policy in Tibet of Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India.

Although valid for ten years from 1905, this Treaty was revised in 1911, when Sir Edward Grey, who assumed direction of our foreign policy from 1906 onwards, was anxious to eliminate the possibility that we should become involved in war against the United States of America by the operation of Article II. He therefore added a clause to this effect:—

"Should either of the high contracting parties conclude a treaty of general arbitration with a third Power, it is agreed that nothing in this Agreement shall impose on such contracting party an obligation

to go to war with the Power with whom such an arbitration treaty is in force." We were, at that time, negotiating an arbitration treaty with the United States of America; the terms thereof had in fact been determined and initialled by the negotiators. The American Senate, however, which appears constantly as an element of sheer instability in its country's foreign policy, rejected the proposed agreement, just as it had rejected the Salisbury-Cleveland Arbitration Treaty of 1897. Sir Edward Grey's pacific ruse was foiled. He made another attempt to achieve his purpose in 1914, and this time he was more successful. He secured the signature of a "Peace Commission Treaty" in September, a month after the outbreak of the Great European War. It was not an Arbitration Treaty, but the British Foreign Minister assumed that it was, and notified Japan that "the British Government would regard it as a general treaty of arbitration" for the purposes of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement. Sir Edward Grey was not fond of diplomatic juggling, but he seems to have felt himself justified in resorting to it in the cause of peace.

6.

The conclusion of a treaty is the touchstone of statesmanship. It provides for future contingencies. A statesman worthy of the name must be something of a seer; he has to look into the future; and as his foresight is true or mistaken he will be judged successful or unsuccessful by posterity. A signed treaty may either be a support in time of trouble, or a millstone round the neck of the signatory.

The Anglo-Japanese Agreement on the whole strengthened our position in the world up to and including the period of the Great War; but it carried with it grave disadvantages. It excited hostility in China; it roused irritation and suspicion in North America, and not in the United States alone; the Indian clause was probably a mistake, and conveyed

an impression that we were uncertain of our capacity to guard our Indian frontier.

On the other hand Lord Lansdowne's policy succeeded in its purpose of checking Russia, and thereby achieved the paradox of paving the way to an understanding with her. A strong, resolute attitude is often the means of gaining the respect and the friendship of an opponent. Russia took her rebuff in the Far East as definitive; she resigned herself to the lack of a warm-water port, and strove to live on good terms with us. Subsequently she entertained the hope of acquiring Constantinople by agreement with us.

Our Japanese alliance naturally effected a great general improvement in our position in the Japanese Empire; and the vast benefits which accrued to it from its victories and political advancement were shared in part by us. The Treaty certified to the community of interests which then existed between the two Powers, and attracted into our orbit the nation which was soon to become the Asiatic Power second in greatness only to ourselves. It rendered Japan's co-operation in the Great War more cordial than it would otherwise have been; her help in policing the Pacific and the Indian oceans, and in convoying Indian, Australian, and New Zealand troops to the theatres of hostilities was invaluable.

Yet Japan did not join with us immediately on the outbreak of war in August 1914, although we might have claimed her assistance under Article II. of the 1905 and 1911 Treaties; she sent an ultimatum to Germany, and only on the latter's refusal to comply with her particular demands took military action against Germany's Far Eastern possessions. In May 1915 Japan presented twenty-one demands to China, which if accepted would have made of the Celestial Empire a vassal State. This act was contrary to Article V.; and was committed without "fully and frankly communicating" with us, as required by Article I. Moreover, the iconoclastic methods of Bolsheviks at the Petrograd Foreign Office have

divulged the existence of a secret Russo-Japanese Treaty concluded in 1916 (3rd January).[8] Before the United States entered the war and invited China to follow their example Japan, in 1915, opposed Chinese participation on the side of the Western Powers. In these respects Japanese policy, during the period when Britain's chances of victory appeared remote, was incompatible with the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

History may justify as opportune Lord Lansdowne's experiment. He made his treaties terminable at short periods. It was not his fault if by reason of super-sensitive regard for Japanese feelings his successors failed to denounce the Agreement when its fore-estimated usefulness expired. To suggest, as Mr Lloyd-George did in the House of Commons on 18th August 1921,[9] that such a denunciation would be "ungentlemanly," is to pose the novel doctrine that a treaty once concluded is bound to be perpetual. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was designed in the first instance to defend Chinese integrity against Russian aggression. Japan has taken Russia's place as the danger to China. To maintain the principle of our policy we must control the incidence of its application.

# CHAPTER II

## THE ENTENTE CORDIALE

"Tout vient à temps à qui sait attendre."

### 1.

Lord Lansdowne was an opportunist; not in the derogatory meaning, that he snatched at immediate gain with disregard of ultimate consequences, but in the sense that he took every occasion which presented itself of furthering his policy. After mature reflection and some vacillation he decided that the moment had come for Britain to abandon her policy of aloofness and to participate continuously in European affairs by the side of chosen friends. Whom she should choose was a matter for consideration and opportune action.

Lord Lansdowne's upbringing had endowed him with a European as opposed to the insular outlook, and it was thus easier for him to reverse the policy of his great predecessor than it would have been for another politician of his time. The Boer War had made patent the disadvantages of isolation. Even so robust a Briton as Mr Joseph Chamberlain had announced his conversion. In a famous speech at Leicester, delivered in November 1899, he declared that Britain could not remain permanently isolated in Europe; and threw out the suggestion that Britain, America, and Germany, being kin, should bind themselves together, and together dominate the world. It was an imperialistic expression of the splendid conception of Mr Cecil Rhodes, who had founded scholarships at Oxford tenable by members of the three great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race, and hoped thereby to familiarise

England with the imperial view-point, to bring the traditions and the culture of England's oldest university within the reach of the youngest scions of her race, and to weld three powerful countries together by the surest of all bonds, identity of outlook.

For fifty years Britain had kept herself aloof from European entanglements and devoted her energies to the consolidation of her ever-widening Empire. The war which broke upon us at the end of the century brought a dramatic response from every British Dominion to the need of the Mother country, and proved that unity of spirit and of purpose did indeed permeate the most scattered, the most distant, and the most secluded parts of the British realm. Mr Chamberlain's proposal was the first indication that the British nation was now the British Commonwealth of nations; and that it was time for this vast imperial organism, grown to full strength, to take a more active part in the affairs of Europe and the world.

The Boer War had caused us great material losses. It had also caused us a more serious loss of prestige. The triumphs of Salisburian diplomacy, the rout of France at Fashoda, the recession of the United States from strident chauvinism to meek acquiescence in the Venezuelan affair, triumphs won without the loss of a single British life or the expenditure of a penny; the ubiquity of Britain's trade, the supremacy of her merchants and her mastery of the seas, were the wonder and the envy of the world. Continental nations had come to think that England would always have her way, and were perhaps unduly irritated by the nonchalant ease with which apparently she attained her successes. They were also constantly provoked by the quiet but confident assumption of travelling Britons that they were superior to the inhabitants of the country which they happened to be visiting. Then suddenly the world saw, during those few unlucky weeks at the end of the year 1899, this mighty Empire struggling in vain with two puny farmer republics, who, badly organised and ill-equipped, inflicted reverse after

reverse upon the British army. Pent-up envy broke out in cries of derision. This Titan, too, whose "brightness was excellent and form terrible," had feet of clay. Every Continental country delighted to point at us the finger of scorn. Our selfish isolation had lost us all sympathy. Our soldiers, our generals, our statesmen, our venerable Queen were daily insulted by the Press of every capital in Europe. Hatred so universal astonished British statesmen. It would not probably have discomposed them much, had there not been as well a definite danger of a European coalition against us. It was discovered by our diplomacy that conversations were taking place between Germany, France, and Russia in the intention of intervening to stop the war on the grounds of humanity. The danger, it is true, swiftly passed. The British nation roused itself and showed early in the year 1900, that it meant in earnest to go through with the business and bring the enemy to terms as quickly as possible. The German Kaiser had cast the mantle of his protection over the Boers for some years past; he had actually announced that the maintenance of the South African Republics was "a vital German interest." Their independence being now seriously jeopardised, however, he abandoned them. He refused to receive President Krüger when he came to Europe, and secretly informed the British Government of the projected coalition against them, of which he himself had probably been the principal instigator.[1]

2.

Realising that Britain was still a force to be reckoned with, Kaiser Wilhelm thought the moment propitious for renewing his advances for a general political agreement with her. Such advances had already been made in 1899 and had met with a not unfavourable reception. Mr Chamberlain had several conversations, at Windsor and elsewhere, with the Kaiser and his Chancellor, Prince Bülow, who were then on a visit to England. Proposals for an Anglo-

German Convention were seriously discussed. But Lord Salisbury was only half-heartedly converted from isolation, and proved a stumbling-block. Now, two years later, these conversations were renewed, and Lord Lansdowne listened with sympathetic ear. The German Chargé d'Affaires, Baron von Eckardstein, was a sedulous and able advocate of an Anglo-German entente.[2] He had married the daughter of a rich Englishman, and was liked in London society. He was honoured with the friendship of King Edward, and was a constant visitor to Halton, the Buckinghamshire residence of Mr Alfred Rothschild, and the resort of every pro-German element in British politics. It was then, naturally, by no means discreditable to be numbered among the pro-Germans. The Germans were the solid conservative race with whom Britain could best co-operate; they had a reputation for sobriety and virtue; they were akin to us, and Queen Victoria never concealed her preference for them over other Continental peoples. It had been quite fashionable for a period after the Franco-Prussian War for smart young Englishmen to take commissions in the German Army. Her Majesty's eldest daughter had married the Emperor Frederick; the young Monarch who now invited our friendship was King Edward's nephew. He had hurried from Berlin to attend the funeral of Queen Victoria, and been acclaimed in the streets with warm demonstrations of sympathy. Bismarck, it was known, had made it a cardinal point of his policy not to quarrel with Britain over the acquisition of territory in Africa during the long triangular Colonial struggles with France. France on the other hand, our traditional enemy, was in the throes of internal convulsions: ministry succeeded ministry, and none grappled satisfactorily with anti-militarism and the most flagrant forms of destructive socialism. We had formerly been the natural ally of Prussia: we and they were masculine peoples: and Lord Salisbury's phrase about the degeneracy of the Latin race stuck in the public mind. Our policy accorded with Germany's in West and

Central Africa, and in Morocco. Just before the outbreak of the Boer War we had settled our differences in Samoa and in Oceania, and had even come to an hypothetical understanding (in 1898) over the ultimate division of the Portuguese colonies, which the Lisbon Government was supposed by the prospective and self-appointed heirs to be desirous of mortgaging in return for financial assistance. Kinship and interest alike seemed to beckon us towards Germany.

In these circumstances Mr (now Sir Valentine) Chirol, then foreign editor of *The Times*, was specially invited by the German Foreign Office to Berlin, where informal conversations had been initiated. Mr Chirol was requested to come to the Foreign Ministry in the Wilhelmstrasse, where a large number of documents marked "highly confidential" were placed before him. These documents, which testified to Germany's cordial efforts to establish a general understanding with Britain, he afterwards discovered to have been profusely garbled. He was further invited to see the German Chancellor. Prince Bülow was very eloquent about his desire for a Treaty which should cover all Anglo-German interests in Europe, Africa, and America; but not in Asia. There Germany had no intention of putting her sword at Britain's disposal against Russia. One of the most singular features of the proposal was Germany's insistence that the provisions of this alliance should extend to the American Continent, although neither in North or South America had Germany any possessions to be safeguarded. But if she had no possessions she had many subjects, on whose behalf Germany probably intended some day to challenge the Monroe doctrine. It would suit her admirably to have Britain on her side in a struggle with the United States. It also occurred to Mr Chirol that to guarantee Germany's territorial integrity in Europe was to guarantee her possession of Alsace-Lorraine, and thus perpetuate the estrangement between Britain and France. Prince Bülow deplored the attacks on England which filled the German Press, and gave his word of honour that he would never

countenance such attacks in the future, and would not allow them to "deflect him by so much as a hair's breadth from the policy of true friendliness to England which lay near his heart."

Yet no sooner had Mr Chirol returned to London than the anti-British clamour of the whole Teutonic Press, silent for a few weeks, became more strident than ever before. Mr Chirol had been for some years *Times* correspondent in Berlin. He knew that at the Wilhelmstrasse there was a bureau which controlled the German newspapers so completely that they were state-organs of propaganda, working for the German Government, in peace as in wartime, in foreign countries as well as at home. He therefore wrote to inquire of the Foreign Ministry the reason for this extraordinary change of front. He received a telegraphic reply, "Wir haben einen Korb bekommen," a slang expression which may be translated, "We have been chucked."[3]

3.

Lord Lansdowne had in fact just dropped the conversations with Germany. He too had come to doubt her sincerity. Britain had signed a Convention with her in October 1900 relative to the territorial integrity of China and the maintenance of the "open door." Article III. thereof contained the stipulation that if a third party essayed to secure territorial advantages to itself from the unsettled state of China, the two contracting Powers should consult together to take common measures for the protection of their interests. The "third party" could hardly be any other country but Russia; the place where her proneness to expansion was leading her at the moment was Manchuria. During the Boxer risings which brought the armies of all the Great Powers to Peking in 1900, Russian troops occupied the whole of Manchuria; and when the other Powers withdrew their armies, Russia set about consolidating her position there. She furthermore sought to wring permission from China to

establish permanent Russian Controllers over the railways and the mines. Such designs clearly constituted a case for joint Anglo-German action. But Germany did not take this view. She desired nothing better than to see Russia embroiled in the Far East. Prince Bülow stated in the Reichstag, on 15th March 1901, that the Anglo-German Convention did not apply to Manchuria. Lord Lansdowne replied that there had never been any doubt in the minds of the negotiators of the Convention but that Manchuria was included within its scope.[4]

This serious difference in interpretation of a Convention recalled vividly to Lord Lansdowne's mind several cases of German activity on which contrary constructions might be placed. Germany was planning the great railway-line across the plains and the deserts of Asia Minor and Syria to Bagdad and the Persian Gulf, which was to "help" Britain by shortening the route to India, and in which British capital was invited to participate. Kaiser Wilhelm II., whose temperament was charged with the most unexpected contradictions, and who seemed impelled to express every passing mood in action, had paid a visit to the Turkish Sultan in 1898 when that Monarch's hands were still red from the butchery of Armenians. He had continued his journey to Jerusalem, where he had posed as the champion of Christian Catholicism, and had gone on to Damascus, where he announced himself as the true friend of "the 300 million Mahommedans[5] who live scattered over the globe." Of these Mahommedans 70 million owed allegiance to the King of England. The Kaiser, in England, delighted to be thought of as an English gentleman, but he never understood Englishmen. He visited Gibraltar, and sent the British War Office a plan of suggested improvements for its fortifications. In the same spirit of officious friendliness he sent Queen Victoria a plan of campaign in South Africa for the use of our generals, who were being temporarily held up by the Boers. In a letter to King Edward he referred to some British Cabinet

Ministers as "unmitigated noodles." The minds of Englishmen were being gradually directed, by many suspicious circumstances, to the large number of German tourists, German waiters, and German hairdressers who frequented with peculiar affection our south-eastern coasts and our military and naval centres. The German mercantile marine and the German navy were being increased at a rate that seemed disproportionate to the growth of German commerce. Political co-operation with Germany both in China and Venezuela had provided cause for misgivings. Mr Joseph Chamberlain, who had, as we have seen, been the first to moot the idea of an alliance, became involved in an exchange of acrimonious speeches with the German Chancellor over the conduct of British troops in South Africa. In reply to the disgraceful attacks which Prince Bülow, in spite of his solemn word, had let loose in the German Press, Mr Chamberlain declared that the behaviour of British troops would compare favourably with those of any in the world, including the German; and he alluded to the atrocities committed by the German army during its advance on Paris in 1870.

A member of the German Reichstag called the British army a band of brigands during a parliamentary debate, and Prince Bülow, so far from administering a rebuke, declared that criticising the German army was like biting granite. "What I have said, I have said," was Mr Chamberlain's rejoinder, on 11th January 1902, at Birmingham, "I withdraw nothing. I qualify nothing." He wanted to have nothing more to do with the Germans. A month later, on 8th February, Baron von Eckardstein learned that his plans were doomed. In his earlier conversations with Mr Chamberlain he had virtually come to an arrangement over Morocco, which he believed might be the basis of a wider Agreement. On that February evening he was invited to dine at Marlborough House. Mr Chamberlain was another guest; so was M. Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador. After dinner

Baron von Eckardstein had the mortification of seeing Mr Chamberlain suddenly go aside into the billiard-room with M. Cambon, and there engage in earnest conversation; and he managed to overhear snatches in which the word Morocco very frequently occurred.[2]

4.

Without a doubt most Englishmen shared Mr Chamberlain's resolve to have no more to do with a German alliance. Lord Lansdowne shared it. So long as he had believed in Germany's sincerity he had been favourable to Baron von Eckardstein's suggestions. The Wilhelmstrasse, however, seemed to lack the good faith with which their London representative was animated; there invariably lurked in their proposals a hint of some mental reservation or unavowed purpose. To Lord Lansdowne's prudent mind it appeared an unwarrantable risk to give a pledge of co-operation to an autocrat of the Kaiser's capricious temperament. But he did not abandon his purpose, or allow to atrophy the impulse necessary to act with boldness when his judgment recommended it.

The first public indication he gave of the preference which he felt for France was in the early summer of 1901. At that time the French Government was pressing claims upon the Sultan of Morocco which that Monarch professed to find excessively irksome. He knew the age-long rivalry of France and Britain, nowhere keener than in his own dominions. He resolved to play upon it; and sent to London a special ambassador, who made the most flattering proposals to Lord Lansdowne. He actually offered Britain a virtual protectorate over Morocco in return for her services in restoring order. Britain had for years been building up a position in Morocco. Acceptance of this offer would make her supreme; and France might be ousted.

The temptation to close might easily have proved too much for a Minister who should be desirous above

everything of winning the glory which a neat gain over a rival nation is sure to bring. But Lord Lansdowne refused the Sultan's offer (and thereby greatly disappointed the influential British community in Tangier). The German Foreign Ministry, whose joy it has always been to see other countries embroiled, was very angry; and although Lord Lansdowne then insisted that France should not step in where Britain had refused to go, and that the absolute independence of Morocco should be maintained, the Quai d'Orsay was correspondingly delighted. It was the first open act of friendship which Britain had vouchsafed to France for more than a generation. Lord Lansdowne would hardly have acted as he did if he had not even then made up his mind to work for the French Alliance. But until Lord Salisbury finally laid down the premiership, in July 1902, a departure from isolation was impossible.

5.

Meanwhile an event occurred which had a profound influence upon our foreign relations. Queen Victoria died on 22nd January 1901, and was succeeded by King Edward VII. A change of Sovereign has in recent years come to be regarded as merely an event which touches the heart of the nation and which gives it an opportunity of testifying to its love of the Royal House, a love more or less evenly divided between the sovereign whose demise is lamented and the heir who is about to succeed. But a reign of sixty years had given Victoria exceptional prestige and authority, and her friendly sentiment towards Germany was as well known as the love of her successor for Paris and for France. The personality of King Edward, moreover, was so vivid that it was impossible, however constitutionally he might rule, that he should not influence his Government's foreign policy. He was not the man to be an impassive spectator of events either at home or abroad. He loved travel, and had visited European Capitals since the age of eighteen. He was by nature

the ideal diplomatist—a cosmopolitan who yet cherishes an unalterable preference for his own country. He possessed a never-failing knack of making felicitous remarks, and made them in three languages. Wherever he went in Europe he was accompanied by Sir Charles Hardinge, or another responsible official conversant with foreign affairs, and he seemed to attract to himself the leading politicians as well as the other luminaries of the countries he was visiting. He had both a warm heart and a shrewd mind. He knew that diplomatic successes consist in a series of small gains; an apt phrase here, an opportune civility there, in carefully considered and carefully worded suggestions, often thrown off as casual remarks. A good diplomatist always appears at his ease; he remembers the particular position of the person whom he is addressing, and forgets neither his antecedents nor the quarters to which the confidences made to him are likely to be carried. He cleverly averts collisions between uncongenial personalities. All these qualities King Edward possessed in a superlative degree. His readiness, his tact, and his urbanity were universally recognised and made him universally popular; they were solvents to every kind of diplomatic difficulty. He enjoyed the confidence of his countrymen and won the trust of his foreign interlocutors; he always seemed to remember what they had said the last time he met them; and would carry through a point for which he had prepared the way weeks or months before. The foreign policy which he favoured, and which was also the policy of his Government, found in him its ablest exponent. His genial nature sought peace and friendship with all countries in general and with France in particular. He frankly told the French Ambassador so early in the year 1902, when Lord Salisbury was still Prime Minister. He was the chief British architect of the Entente Cordiale.

The year 1901 marks the turning-point when the British Government's relations became rather cooler with Germany, and rather warmer with France. The

public, however, remained insular and aloof, inclined to be neither pro-German nor pro-French. The French Press had been hardly less scurrilous in its attacks on England than the newspapers of Berlin; President Loubet had received ex-President Krüger just before the Kaiser had refused to see him. The affair of Captain Dreyfus, who had been condemned to imprisonment on a pestilential island for the simple reason, so it appeared to the British public, that he was a Jew, roused considerable indignation in England, which produced counter-irritation in France, where anti-Semitism had risen to fever-heat. The Entente Cordiale has been a case, so rare in democratic politics, where statesmanship has led and the public has followed.

6.

The great constructive statesman of the Entente was M. Delcassé, French Foreign Minister through five successive Governments, from 1898 to 1905. He came into office with the deliberate purpose of making an alliance with Britain. One of his first acts had been to put his signature to the humiliating document which closed the Fashoda incident. As at all moments of friction between Britain and France, the Berlin Foreign Office was whispering offers of friendship in the ear of the aggrieved party, and had M. Hanotaux, M. Delcassé's predecessor, remained French Foreign Minister a little longer, the Entente Cordiale might never have come about. When M. Delcassé came to the Quai d'Orsay he found on his desk a *note verbale* left by M. Hanotaux explaining certain proposals of friendly import made by Prince Münster, the German Ambassador. M. Delcassé judged it convenient to leave this note unanswered. Almost at the very moment when Sir Herbert Kitchener and Major Marchand were angrily facing one another on the waters of the Upper Nile, M. Delcassé said to a friend in the Quai d'Orsay, "I do not want to leave this place without having established a good entente with

England." Seldom has a more noble wish been uttered in circumstances of such provocation and difficulty; and seldom has a wish been so splendidly fulfilled. Through all the bitterness of anti-British rancour which seethed over France during the succeeding years, throughout the frequent close confabulations of British and German politicians which have been narrated, M. Delcassé held to his purpose.

His efforts were brilliantly seconded by the ambassador whom he sent to London three months after his own accession to office. M. Paul Cambon was eminently fitted for the task which he has brilliantly accomplished, of seeking the friendship of a successful antagonist without forfeiting any of the dignity of his country. Rebuffed at the outset by Lord Salisbury, M. Cambon persisted in advocating on all suitable occasions the advantages to both England and France of a good understanding. He found a ready listener in Lord Lansdowne, who was from 1902 onward steadily encouraged by the new Prime Minister, Mr A. J. Balfour.

## 7.

Among the unofficial persons who worked for such an understanding was Mr (afterwards Sir Thomas) Barclay, at one time President of the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris, and therefore peculiarly placed to understand its advantages.[6] The big French industrial centres, Lille, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Toulouse, and half a hundred other Chambers of Commerce passed resolutions in favour of a treaty between 1901 and 1903.[7] To Mr Barclay on the British side and Baron d'Estournelles de Constant on the other, must be given the chief credit for the Arbitration Treaty which was signed by Lord Lansdowne and M. Cambon on 14th October 1903. It specially excluded from arbitration the vital interests, the independence or the honour of the contracting parties; but it was nevertheless the stone on which the Entente Cordiale was founded.

In the laying of this stone King Edward played his usual happy part. Early in 1903 His Majesty determined to pay his first visit to Paris as King of England. The proposal caused a certain flutter in French official circles. They liked King Edward but they did not yet like England. They suggested that if the King were to come, it would perhaps be as well that the visit should be as quiet as possible. Paris crowds were apt to express their feelings rather impulsively; and anything in the nature of a hostile demonstration would be painful to everybody. These misgivings found no echo in King Edward's heart. He declared that he loved the French and trusted the Paris crowd. He would come as King to the Capital he had so often visited as Prince, and expected the full ceremonial which was due to his rank. The King's courageous resolve was vindicated. He was received without exuberance; but sullen indifference had perceptibly changed to friendliness before he left. His visit, in Lord Lansdowne's words, "gave a great impetus to the Anglo-French movement." It was followed later in the same year by a visit of M. Loubet to London. M. Delcassé accompanied him and met Lord Lansdowne.

8.

The details which had to be regulated were innumerable, extending over the whole range of Anglo-French interests in Egypt, in Morocco, in Madagascar, in Newfoundland, in the New Hebrides, and in Siam. The active minds of Sir Thomas (now Lord) Sanderson, for many years chief permanent official of the Foreign Office, and of M. de Fleuriau, Counsellor of the French Embassy, were fully occupied disposing of points which for decades had caused friction, and each one of which was capable of producing an "international incident." The agreement as finally enacted consisted of a Convention of nine Articles and of four separate Declarations. It was signed on 8th April 1904. What had seemed an Utopian dream to many level heads on either side of the Channel had been realised. The two

great nations which had opposed each other for centuries took the oath of friendship. In exchange for a free hand in Morocco, France resigned all her special rights in Egypt, though she was still to maintain her Law School, hospitals, missions, and the general administration of Egyptian antiquities. They undertook no longer to embarrass our position by the resuscitation of prescriptive rights on the Nile. We acknowledged her paramount position in Morocco, where the maintenance of order was so imperative an interest to the Power in charge of Algeria. British nationals in Morocco were guaranteed for thirty years against any discriminatory treatment. Each undertook not to alter the political status of their respectively protected States. In many cases only a basis of settlement was reached. Differences in Siam, for instance, were only finally composed in 1909.[8]

The gain to Britain's position in Egypt was enormous, and only partially counterbalanced by our sacrifices in Morocco. Our world-wide security was generally increased; and a redistribution of the British fleet in accordance with the ideas of Admiral Lord Fisher was rendered possible. A larger proportion was concentrated in the North Sea; and we relied upon France to respect and even to guard British interests in the Mediterranean.

9.

But the Entente Cordiale is usually regarded as the most important event of modern diplomacy because it betokened a new international distribution of power. It re-established the equilibrium of Europe. Since the war in the Far East, Russia had become a broken reed to her ally. France lay at the mercy of Germany. The Entente, while it made Britain a factor to be reckoned with once more in European politics, assured our support to the Power which had been our enemy so long as it had striven for hegemony in Europe or for Colonial equality with ourselves. The

Agreement of April 1904 closed France's era of Colonial expansion; the new aspirant to the hegemony of Europe was Germany.

Events, and not theories, had determined Britain's course from the quietude of the pre-Salisburian period to Colonial expansion, to aggressive imperialism, and now to a defined place in the polity of Europe. We ranged ourselves on the side of a Latin race against one which was much nearer to us in kind. Our close association with Latins was a new thing in British history, and has had profound effects on the character of the two nations; for the adjustment of differences by the two governments grew rapidly into a union of the two peoples. Frequent visits were arranged at once to Paris and London for the unmoneyed classes of either nation, who had not hitherto had much chance of knowing one another. Personal contact brought exchange of ideas. France was at that time far more "advanced" in political and social theories than we were. Anti-militarism and communism were widely preached, in England scarcely understood. We imbibed many pacifist and socialistic theories, and lost much of our insularity. On the other hand, we spread a love of games among the French. Such sports as football, lawn tennis, golf, and athletics got far greater hold on Frenchmen than they had before 1904. It cannot be entirely fortuitous that a French lady has lately become the world's champion at lawn tennis, and that a Frenchman's is the most popular name in the boxing world to-day. A school on the model of an English public school was founded near Rouen and successfully carried on by a former French master of Harrow. The French on their part have imparted to us some of their devotion to things of the mind. We are less John Bullish than we were; and they no longer think of us as exclusively devoted to roast beef and our own concerns.

At a difficult moment of a post-entente political crisis a French publicist was led to exclaim, "Have we exchanged a fierce antagonist for a meek friend?"

Britain appeared to him to be less resolute, less arrogant perhaps, as France's ally than she had been when, for instance, she opposed her at Fashoda. There was no doubt truth in his rueful exclamation. No nation can be quite so forceful in tone and decided in policy when it is harnessed to another, as when it is responsible to itself alone. It is also possible that, with our abandonment of insularity has come a certain slackening of the moral fibre.

The Parisian spirit of ready condonation has not been without effect on the most intimate habits of the nation. In the art of the theatre, where the French have long excelled and where we have therefore the more readily consented to copy, Parisian influence has contributed greatly to alter the tone and theme of English plays; and the change reflects an altered tone in private and public life. National habits and foreign policy are not without connection; indeed, activity abroad is conditioned by health at home. If we have lost in robust Philistinism and gained in psychological insight and comprehension of alien temperaments, the change cannot but show itself in our dealings with foreign nations.

## 10.

The solidity of the Entente was soon to be tested by Germany. The Kaiser imagined that if he assailed it early enough he would drive a breach in it. He chose Morocco for the point of attack. At nine o'clock on the morning of 31st March 1905 Kaiser Wilhelm arrived off Tangier on the Imperial yacht *Hohenzollern* escorted by a cruiser. He seems at first to have had one of his fits of oscillation, and to have hesitated about proceeding on his enterprise. A telegram was handed to him from Baron von Holstein, the chief wirepuller of the Berlin Foreign Ministry who, himself an eccentric recluse, understood better than anybody the vagaries of his master's mind. The Kaiser hesitated no longer. He disembarked. He delivered in quick succession two speeches, both of which contained studied challenges to

France. He proceeded to the German Legation, and said to the Sultan's uncle, Abd el Malek, who had been sent to greet him, that he considered the Sultan an absolutely independent Monarch, and that he desired to negotiate with him directly the best means to safeguard the German interests in his dominions. He further gave the Mahgzen the benefit of his advice as to how reforms should be introduced. At three o'clock the Kaiser re-embarked and the *Hohenzollern* steamed away.

This sensational intervention very clearly indicated that Germany's settled policy was not to allow anything important to take place in any portion of the globe without her participation. The visit followed by a couple of weeks the disaster which had befallen Russia at the battle of Mukden. The Kaiser had proffered his help to all the Moslems of the world; he would therefore take them under his care in Morocco, strengthen Germany's position in Constantinople, and flout France. Moroccan affairs must be regulated by all Europe, not by France and Britain alone. Above all he hoped to drive a wedge between these two Powers.

It was a clever attack and well delivered. It achieved all its minor objectives, but failed completely to break the Entente Cordiale. For a while Europe was in ferment, and diplomatic views were feverishly exchanged between all the chanceries of the six Great Powers. France was cowed. A debate in the Chamber revealed with startling frankness the deficiencies of her military system. Under the menace of the German storm she jettisoned M. Delcassé, who refused to agree to the summoning of a Conference which was demanded by Prince Bülow. The great builder of the Entente retired into private life. But his work was done. The edifice of which he had been the master builder stood firm. Through all the confusion of proposals and counter proposals which thickened the political atmosphere, Lord Lansdowne never wavered in his support of the French view. He warned Germany that if she made the Entente Cordiale a cause for attacking France,

British public opinion would scarcely allow us to remain indifferent. He made to the French Government no promise of military assistance ;[9] but he gave it unstinted diplomatic support. The fall of M. Delcassé was a great loss to France. But she learned in the hour of humiliation the value of her new friendship. No individual did so much to transform the Entente from a merely negative adjustment of Colonial disputes into a positive European union as Kaiser Wilhelm.

# CHAPTER III

## MACEDONIA, 1903-1905

"La diplomatie est la police en grande costume."

NAPOLEON.

### 1.

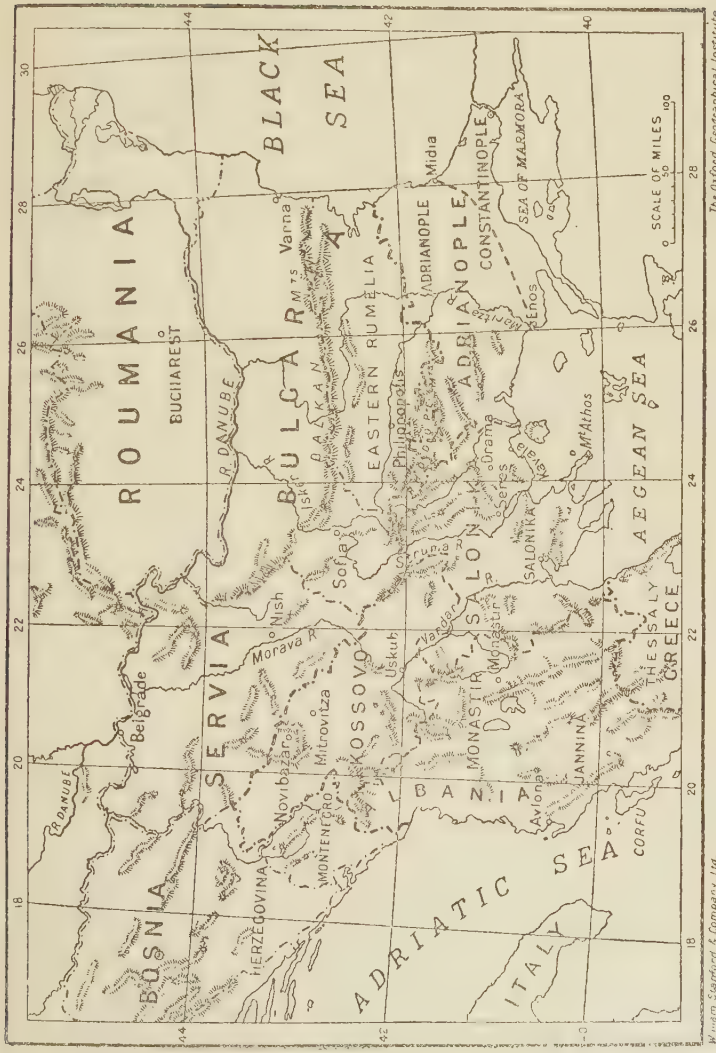
MUCH of Lord Lansdowne's time at the Foreign Office was taken up with the "Macedonian Question," for long years a puzzle and a torment to every Chancery and every Great Power. It was a legacy of Lord Salisbury's one great blunder in foreign affairs. Lord Salisbury had saved the Macedonians from the domination, as he thought, of Russia; he had not saved them from the Turks; nor from themselves. Had Bulgaria been firmly established in Macedonia she would probably have emancipated herself there, as elsewhere, from Russian tutelage and have maintained her authority against her Balkan rivals. There might never have been a Macedonian question. Turkey might never even have heard the name Macedonia.

For Macedonia was only the convenient designation by European diplomacy of the three Turkish vilayets, or provinces, of Kossovo, Monastir, and Salonika, which lie between Serbia and the Ægean Sea. These, with Albania and Adrianople, formed what was left of Turkey in Europe when the twentieth century began. In justice to the statesmen of 1878, it must be said that they could hardly foresee the cupidity and cynicism which this morsel of decaying Turkey subsequently roused in the States of Europe, great and small; and by Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin they did obtain from the Porte an undertaking that it would accord this region a modified autonomy with the right to an elective

assembly. No Macedonian parliament has ever met. Like other clauses of the Berlin Treaty what it was the business of all the Powers to enforce was enforced by no one. Most of the signatories have had too many of their own interests to look after. They had, moreover, to deal with a peculiarly astute ruler of Turkey. Abdul Hamid, who succeeded to the throne in 1876, was one of the most cunning, cruel, and capable monarchs of his long line. He discovered and used relentlessly the policy of *divide et impera*. He played off one Power against another with a discrimination of their various foibles and appetites which showed him to be a master judge of national characteristics.

He made Ottoman rule more personal and more pernicious. About the middle of the nineteenth century Turkey had produced more than one enlightened Grand Vizier, trained under the eye of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe; they had been animated with some desire to introduce Western methods, and had enjoyed a certain liberty of action in the direction of affairs. But they had not succeeded in establishing in any portion of the Turkish dominions a sound system of education, of justice, or finance. The Ottoman tradition had been too strong for them—to conquer and to live upon the conquered, to rule and not to govern. "The more conditions are ameliorated," said Herbert Spencer, "the more they are declared to be intolerable." The Turk seemed to understand the maxim by instinct. He never began to ameliorate the condition of his subjects.

Under Abdul Hamid even Turkish administration degenerated. It became harsher from being concentrated in his own despotic hands. Telegraph wires were an invention of which he hastened to avail himself, and, they ran not to the Porte, but into the Yildiz Kiosk (Palace) where courtiers, fanatics, eunuchs, and spies were the only intermediaries between himself and the outer world. By the side of every provincial official, even sometimes of commanders in the field, was a personal agent of the Sultan, whose reports were more




MACEDONIA 1903.

readily listened to than those of his chief. A Turkish provincial governor found that under Abdul Hamid's régime his principal duty was to assure the supremacy of Moslem over Christian. The next important duty was to collect tribute, which, to satisfy Europe, was called taxes. His third task was to keep his district quiet. He might choose his own methods. They might be the bludgeon or the bastinado. So long as their application was effective and did not attract the attention of Western Europe the official would win Court favour and retain his place.

No roads were made in Macedonia, or railways, except for strategic purposes. The inhabitants got some schooling, by their own efforts. The villagers hired their own watchmen. Banditism flourished, and a man went to work in the fields with a spade over one shoulder and a rifle over the other. A few Turkish hospitals existed, but they were regarded rather as prisons by the native inhabitants. The art of a modern government has never been acquired by the Ottoman stratocracy ; and even at Constantinople, the most important posts have usually been filled, not by genuine Turks, but by Ottomanised Armenians, Greeks, or Jews.

2.

So long as Ottoman subjects were content to live as serfs and pay their tribute they were unmolested. But since the awakening of San Stefano the consciousness of separate lineage grew among the races of Macedonia. From over the borders, from Serbia : from Bulgaria, rejoicing in new-found liberty : from Greece, who had won her freedom by sea and land half a century before, new ideas crept in. Nationalism, that potent spirit to which time after time in the Russian, the Hapsburg, and the Turkish Empires, repose and material prosperity have been sacrificed, began to stir in the breasts of Macedonians. Apathy disappeared. To rebel seemed better than to endure. Drudgery became inexplicably irksome. Even the dullest began to realise the possi-

bility of a better existence. The schools which the Turks allowed them became powder magazines of ideas which eventually blew up Turkish rule. The better their subjects were educated the greater became their craving for political freedom.

Macedonia was inhabited by Bulgars, Serbs, Greeks, Turks, Vlachs, Jews, and lastly, Armenians. The spirit of nationality, therefore, a powerful centripetal force in homogeneous populations, had a disruptive influence in Macedonia. The more definite the idea of freedom became, the keener was the rivalry of races. Each was engaged with rifle and dagger in staking out its claim in the promised land. The Sultan looked cynically on. His principle of *divide et impera* was acting against his internal as well as his external enemies. Bulgar and Serb bands fought each other pitilessly. The more intellectual Greek despised both, and was despised as a weakling by the others. Albanians swooped down from their mountains to foray for loot from all alike. The outlook, the habits, and methods of these peoples could not change all at once. They were where the Turks had found them in the fourteenth century; only, that on to mediæval Christian mentality had been grafted Moslem ferocity.

After the battle of Towton in 1461, when Edward Mortimer entered York, his first care was to remove from the pikes above Micklegate the heads of his father, his brother, and his uncle. His next was to substitute for them the heads of the more noble of the prisoners that he had just taken in battle. In Asia Minor St Bartholomew's Eves still occurred in 1903. Through the Near East, Archbishop Laud's habit of slitting noses or lopping off the ears of those who differed from him was still considered excellent. The maintenance of a *status quo*, so often and so vainly attempted by European diplomacy, was successfully imposed on South-Eastern Europe by Ottoman rule. Turkey may pride herself on the fact of having kept Macedonia mediæval for five centuries.

3.

But retribution was at hand. The cries of the Christians, under the clumsy and ferocious attempts of Turkish soldiers to restore order, re-echoed into Western Europe. In 1902 Sultan Abdul Hamid took alarm, and appointed a Governor-General of the three vilayets to impose silence. Grimly he set about his task. "Solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant" (roughly, "They make a desert and call it pacification"), the bitter indictment of Roman rule which Tacitus put into the mouth of a British chieftain, was far more applicable to Turkish than ever it was to Roman methods. The principal results of his efforts was to check the internecine murders of the Macedonian bands while they turned for a while on their common enemy, the Turk.

A formidable anti-Turk movement began. The "Macedonian Committee" of Sofiâ had been secretly plotting a war of freedom for ten years. It now judged that the moment had come to take action. It was a Bulgarian organisation, and its object was as much to re-establish the Bulgaria of San Stefano as to destroy Turkey. On 2nd August 1903, some haystacks outside the town of Monastir were set ablaze. It was a pre-arranged signal for insurrection; beacons answered on the hills towards Ochrida; the message was carried by answering fires northward into the Kossovo district and southward to the borders of Greece. Bulgarian bands, with arms disinterred from secret caches, emerged from every village. They wrecked the nearest bridge, according to instructions, in order to prevent the passage of troops; they cut the telegraph wires which might send calls for re-inforcements. They surrounded and destroyed Turkish guard-houses. For three weeks they paralysed the Ottoman administration and massacred Turkish soldiers.

The government of Constantinople at once tried to counter the political effects of the rising by showering promises and favours on Greeks and Serbs. In this

they had some success. The chief potential sharers with the Bulgars in the fruits of a victory held aloof, and few of non-Bulgarian race joined the insurgents. The triumph which cunning began, force completed. Turkish troops poured into the Monastir province from every side. They came in large numbers, with an unlimited amount of ammunition, of which the insurgents were running short. The Bulgar bands were overwhelmed, and their castigation was terrible. The campaign developed into a "ghastly game of hide-and-seek." The Turks' first care was to demolish the villages. The stricken families of the rebels took refuge in the hills. Day by day and night by night they were hunted from cave to forest and from valley to peak. They were generally caught in the end. Old men were done to death, children had their brains dashed out, and women were almost invariably violated, for a Christian woman is legitimate prey to the Turk. Such rebels as ever regained their ruined homes found their crops destroyed, their cattle and their household goods carried away. By the end of November central Macedonia was a vast solitude.

4.

Western Europe was roused to intervention. Lord Lansdowne initiated the movement, but the lead was taken out of his hands by Austria and Russia, anxious to keep Balkan affairs under their own direction. A month after the outbreak of the Monastir insurrection, the Tsar, accompanied by his Foreign Minister, Count Lamsdorff, visited the Emperor Franz Josef at his shooting box at Mürzteg in Styria, to which Count Goluchovski, the Austrian Minister, was also invited. A British proposal for a drastic reform scheme had just reached Vienna. The Foreign Ministers at Mürzteg affected to ignore it; and the scheme propounded to Europe a month later (2nd October) was drawn up almost entirely by Count Lamsdorff; for easy-going Goluchovski was sportsman first and

diplomatist afterwards, and spent most of his time out with the shooters.[1] The programme was really the British scheme modified so as to leave more power in the hands of the Sultan than Lord Lansdowne desired.[2] Its three chief points were — the appointment of two Civil Agents, a Russian and an Austrian, to supervise the introduction of reforms and the pacification of the country: but these commissaries to have no executive authority. In the second place a foreign general was to enter the service of the Ottoman Government and re-organise the gendarmerie with the help of a European staff: these officers likewise had their authority strictly limited to advice, and to the work of training recruits. The third point was a modification of the boundaries of the Turkish administrative districts. In most countries provinces are delimited according to geographical and ethnological distinctions. In Turkey the opposite principle prevailed. The more mixed a population in any district, the more suitable it was to form a separate vilayet, for commixion kept the inhabitants quarrelling.

The scheme in its final form appeared to Lord Lansdowne unlikely to succeed, for it omitted to substitute European for Turkish control. He did not, however, condemn it untried on that account. He made the reservation that Britain retained her freedom of action in case of its failure. At the same time he instructed his Ambassador in Constantinople, Sir Nicholas O'Conor, to press forward with all the energy at his command the proposed reform of the gendarmerie, which appeared the most practical of the proposals. Macedonia was divided into sectors, and the small district of Drama was allotted to Britain. There Colonel Bonham achieved considerable success and popularity with the Turkish police. The gendarmerie school at Salonika was also put in charge of a British officer, Sir Edward Grogan. A better discipline was instilled into the Turkish service, and some alleviation to the lot of the Macedonian peasants undoubtedly resulted.

But these benefits were discounted by the unfortunate effect of Clause III. The attempt at making district boundaries conform to racial distinctions produced a most violent recrudescence of internecine strife. Greeks and Bulgars especially, who were freely intermingled along the Ægean coast, butchered each other energetically in order to purge a district of its alien inhabitants. In the Uskub and Kumanovo region, farther north, Bulgars and Serbs, before resorting to extermination, usually gave those who formed the hostile majority a chance of changing their name-suffix. Bulgars and Serbs are so closely akin that their languages and their proper names are very similar. Names are chiefly distinguishable by their termination in — eff and — off (Bulgarian), or — vitch (Serbian). If, therefore, M. Petroff and all his family consented to change their name to Petrovitch, the Serbian band would leave them in peace; and if the Ivanovitches agreed to become Ivanoffs before the next visit of European inspectors, the Bulgar bands would not molest them further. For the purposes of the new registers which were being drawn up whole districts became suddenly homogeneous. In places where the races were evenly balanced several terrified peasant families changed their patronymics more than once. The results of this well-meant reform, therefore, became farcical when they were not sanguinary; and it was abrogated in 1907 after a meeting between Sir Charles Hardinge and the Austrian Foreign Minister at Ischl.[3]

In 1905 Lord Lansdowne managed to effect the establishment of a Financial Commission, whose business it was to frame the Macedonian budget and superintend the collection of taxes. Its introduction was urged on the Austrian Emperor by King Edward on his visit to Ischl in that year, just as his Majesty, ever zealous to further the diplomacy of his Ministers, had pressed on Kaiser Franz Josef the reforms which formed the basis of the Mürzteg programme when he went to Vienna in August 1903. Lord

Lansdowne's financial scheme was perhaps the most beneficent reform that was ever actually introduced into Macedonia; and it is satisfactory to reflect that the enhanced prosperity of thousands, in whose vocabulary justice and equity had hitherto been meaningless words, was mainly attributable to British diplomacy.

5.

Britain, indeed, held a position in the Near East distinct from that of any other Great Power. She alone, with France, was credited with disinterestedness; and she exerted more influence at Constantinople than her ally, and her people showed more interest in Macedonian affairs. The "Balkan Committee" which was formed in London did much to inform the British public, and to enlist its sympathy on behalf of the Macedonians, and especially of the Bulgars. Britain was not supposed to be cloaking designs of her own when she interfered on behalf of the oppressed Christians. The same could not be said of either Austria or Russia. Italy was regarded as too near a neighbour to Albania to take a detached view of Western Macedonian affairs; and her apprehension of Serb encroachment to the Adriatic was bound to affect her impartiality between race and race. Germany held coldly aloof. She refused to take any sector at all for the reorganisation of the gendarmerie. A country which was making a bid for popularity in the Moslem world did not wish to have to join in disagreeable remonstrances at Constantinople. She regarded Austria as the representative of Germanism in the Balkans. Austria was concerned chiefly with trying to secure a through route from Central Europe to the East via Salonika, or Constantinople, or both. The unfortunate Macedonians were pawns who might hamper or promote the attainment of this object. The extent of her reforming zeal was shown in 1907 when Count Achrenthal, who had succeeded Goluchovski in the previous year, withdrew his support from a scheme of judicial reform in

Macedonia, in return for a concession from Turkey for the construction of an Austro-Hungarian railway through the Sanjak of Novibazar to Mitrovitza, which was on the route to Salonika.[4] Russia was believed by all the Balkan States to covet Constantinople. America was performing magnificent work for the future by offering first-rate education to all at the school near Constantinople known as Robert College, which she founded and supported. But she was too far away to show an active interest in Near Eastern politics.

Lord Lansdowne therefore continued, almost single-handed, to press unremittingly for effective reform.[5] He tried to get the Turkish garrison of Macedonia reduced and placed under the ultimate command of the Civil authorities. He strove above all to maintain the principle of internationalisation in Balkan affairs. Austria and Russia agreed in little else than in trying to keep Macedonia a close preserve for their own diplomatic action. The British Minister perceived that so a mutual quarrel would speedily arise, in which the other Powers might become involved; and that in any case their unchecked rivalry would put the sufferings of the Macedonians in the background of their minds. He therefore bore aloft the standard of internationalisation.

Three decades previously, when European Turkey was shaken by the risings of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a difficult situation had arisen for Europe, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, drawing upon his unrivalled experience, wrote a series of letters to *The Times* in which he maintained that the point of paramount importance was that England should not hold aloof, or appear to hold aloof, from the other Powers in making representations at the Porte. Turkey had always yielded to coercion if it was of overwhelming strength, but only on these terms. If the Sultan should perceive one defaulter among the Great Powers, the others might recommend in vain measures divinely inspired. Germany defaulted now; and whatever scheme was recommended was never really

urged unanimously by the Powers. The German Ambassador made a show of supporting it; and the Sultan understood that his resistance would not be unwelcome. Without true internationalisation Austro-Russian intrigues perpetuated the political stagnation caused by Turkish rule, and withheld from Macedonia reforms which in civilised States are an essential part of political life, the normal accompaniment of the progress of ideas. In the United Kingdom a real desire to better the lot of its down-trodden people existed, and Lord Lansdowne did more for their betterment than any other European statesman. British political disinterestedness made it both easier and more difficult for him—easier because his motives were not suspect, more difficult because no country will fight for a cause in which it is not politically interested; and diplomacy unbacked by force carried little weight with the obstinate and short-sighted Government of the Porte.[6]

Lord Lansdowne left the Foreign Office when Mr Balfour's Government fell at the end of the year 1905. His direction of Foreign Affairs received warm tributes from Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and other Liberal leaders. He had had to face no great crises, such as occurred in the times of his predecessor and successor. He did not make himself famous. His work attracted no particular attention either at home or abroad. Yet for being unostentatious it was none the less epoch-making and successful. He made no blunders. After the lapse of nearly twenty years few will question the wisdom of his time-limited alliance with Japan. When he took office Britain was isolated politically and without a friend in Europe. A formidable grouping of Powers hostile to us was made impossible by his timely and resolute diplomacy. While safeguarding British interests throughout the world, he won for his country the trust, the respect, and even the affection of foreign nations—and is that not the *raison d'être* of a Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs?

# CHAPTER IV

## ALGECIRAS, 1906. RUSSIA RECONCILED, 1907

"He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:"

W. WORDSWORTH.

### 1.

In his first attack on the Entente Cordiale the Kaiser, as we have seen, scored two successes. M. Delcassé, Britain's friend, and Germany's stern opponent, lost his place; and an international Conference was summoned to settle the affairs of Morocco, which Paris and London had regarded as concerning France and Britain only. In the lapse of time between the decision to summon, and the actual meeting of the Conference a change of Ministry occurred in England; on 11th December 1905 Sir Edward Grey succeeded Lord Lansdowne as Foreign Secretary. Germans have always been diligent students of English history, and they believed that a Liberal Government was likely to show rather less spirit in foreign affairs than their Unionist predecessors. They counted on a lukewarm support of France by her new ally; they reckoned that France unsupported would be irresolute; and that the preliminary advantage gained by the Kaiser's visit to Tangier in 1905 might be turned into a rout of the Entente Powers. Orders were given to the German delegates to adopt the energetic, forcible attitude of men whose proposals cannot be modified and whose demands resemble those which soldiers make to civilians on conquered territory.

The Germans did not know Sir Edward Grey.

Even before the Liberals had had time to be confirmed in Office by popular vote, the Foreign Minister elect formally announced in a speech in the City of London, his adhesion to the policy of Lord Lansdowne. He accepted the obligation incurred by Britain to allow France an absolutely free hand in carrying through financial or military reforms of which Morocco stood in need, and to "lend France her diplomatic support for the execution of the clauses relative to Morocco."

Sir Edward Grey was a man to whom any obligation of honour, whether national or personal, was sacred. His features betray the man. The firm thin-lipped mouth, the well-moulded lower jaw and chin, the thoughtful deep-set eyes indicate a resolute, austere, and self-disciplined type. He comes of a Northumbrian stock which has given many notable men to British politics. He was by nature reserved, and resembled Lord Salisbury rather than Lord Lansdowne in temperament. Typically north English, he appeared to foreign diplomatists distant and insular; they found him not quite so easy to talk to as Lord Lansdowne; he had no acquaintance with Continental habits and was not even conversant with the French language. He had the simplicity of a true patrician; he was calm, reflective, unvarying. He brought to the judgment of every problem as it arose complete independence of thought; none of his sharpest critics doubted his purity of motive. He was at once homely and dignified, with a big spaciousness of character that brought with it an uplifting, freshening, and soothing influence into heated debate and tangled arguments. Solitude was his stimulant; and he was happiest if he could escape from the buzz of political discussion to listen to the voice of nature.[1] He was the Wordsworth of politics. He loved to walk in Wychwood forest, in Oxfordshire, where virgin growth shelters rare and unmolested birds. He is one of the greatest British authorities on bird life and on fishing, which has been his pastime since his school-

days. He has won immortality in the world of sport as well as of politics, for his name is inscribed as amateur champion of England at (real) tennis for the years 1896 and 1898.

This squire of Fallodon was never very successful as a platform speaker. He learned none of the arts of rhetoric. He possessed no conspicuous intellectual talents. He gave his views quite simply; and did not catch the atmosphere of his audience. Yet in the premier assembly of the world he wielded unparalleled authority. His speeches in the House have been described as utterances delivered from the Bench, not from the Bar.[2] His verdict was final. Nobody thought of appealing against it. Immunity from criticism is perhaps easier to attain in foreign affairs than in any other branch of politics, because of the unfortunate ignorance of them displayed by both parliament and public. But Sir Edward Grey could not have won his special position of authority unless his sincerity and disinterestedness had been unquestionable. The House of Commons esteems most of all political character; and while it admires and applauds tactical dexterity, it gives unquestioning support only to those rare statesmen whose good faith it implicitly trusts. Such public criticism as occurred in the Press moved Sir Edward very little. He drew his conclusions from his own conscience and his own judgment. He seemed sometimes, indeed, to be so sublime in his simplicity as to be quite inaccessible; he instinctively mistrusted public opinion as prone to waywardness. He was not disdainful of the populace, but disregarded it. More than once during the agitation over the Congo atrocities and the Denshawi executions in Egypt this imperviousness stood the country in good stead. Hasty action moulded by the impressions of the moment might have brought our relations with Belgium to breaking-point in the first instance, and in the second case might have produced a situation in Egypt subversive of British rule. Passionless and undemocratic, he yet fairly and adequately represented a great democracy. His

devotion to Liberal principles in home affairs never wavered; but he had a mind which always saw his country above his Party; and when he served his Party it was because he believed he was serving his country through it. In shaping the course of British foreign policy this great English gentleman could altogether forget the partisanship of internal political differences.

2.

He had inherited the doctrine of continuity in foreign policy from his political godfather, Lord Rosebery, whom he had served as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 1892 to 1895. He applied his doctrine at once. Sir Arthur Nicolson was sent in January 1906 as principal British delegate to the Moroccan Conference, with instructions to support France unfalteringly. The Conference met at Algeciras in the south of Spain, chosen, so it was said, because it was the only place anywhere near Morocco which possessed a good hotel. The German delegate was Count von Tattenbach. He took the first opportunity to gain a moment's private conversation with Britain's representative. He explained that he knew the work which Sir Arthur had done for Britain in Morocco, and had especially admired the skill with which her preponderant position had been established: it was a shame that such work should be undone: Britain had got what she wanted from France in Egypt: let her now turn again to Germany, and with German support she would have no difficulty in retaining her position in Morocco as well.

These typically German proposals failed to lure Sir Arthur. Self-elimination in the service of his country is the politician's nearest approach to the self-sacrifice of a soldier on the field of battle; Sir Arthur Nicolson had deliberately to undo at Algeciras what he had worked for ten years to accomplish at Tangier. He had successfully built up a predominant position for his country in Morocco; his instructions now were to

resign the fruits of his work to France; and those instructions he obeyed.

At the beginning of March Sir Edward Grey circularised the Powers to the effect that Britain supported France on all points without reservations. On 18th March the Government of the United States followed suit; and on the following day Russia made a declaration in the same sense. Sir Edwin Egerton, our Ambassador in Rome, pressed the British views upon the Italian Government; our Chargé d'Affaires in Madrid, Sir Fairfax Cartwright, and M. Jules Cambon worked hand in hand.

At one moment of the discussions the attitude of Germany was so menacing that Sir Edward Grey agreed to the proposal of the French Ambassador in London that informal discussions should take place between the French and British military authorities. The British Government had at first demurred to M. Paul Cambon's suggestion, but finally consented on the definite understanding that the arrangements provisionally made should bind neither party to action.[3] These preparations were extended on a later occasion to naval plans for the distribution of the British and French fleets in the Channel and Mediterranean.[4]

Manners count for much in diplomacy; and Bismarck himself once remarked that Prussians would never make good diplomatists. The nations of the world were ready to agree that Germany was right in demanding that Morocco should not be made the special preserve of France; but so domineering was the tone adopted by the Kaiser's representatives that one after another of the negotiators rallied to the French contention. The result of the Conference was a theoretical acceptance of the German doctrine of internationalisation, but a practical disavowal of it by the grant of a privileged position to France.

Germany had gained a Pyrrhic victory. When the Conference broke up on 25th March 1906 she found herself isolated in Europe. The Entente Cordiale was more firmly cemented than before. The Kaiser retained

indeed, the grudging, subservient aid of his Germanic ally. But he had been disappointed absolutely in his avowed hope of making of Britain "a naval Austria";[5] and his condescending praise to Austria on having "been a brilliant second on the duelling ground," led to the resignation of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count Goluchovski. Italy had drawn perceptibly nearer to France, and France and Spain shortly afterwards issued identical declarations announcing their intention to maintain the *status quo* in the Mediterranean.

### 3.

Most important of all was the *rapprochement* which had taken place between England and Russia. Lord Lansdowne, before quitting office, had paved the way for a better understanding with the country which Queen Victoria to her last day regarded as England's "perpetual and desperate foe"; and at Algeciras informal conversations had been held between Count Cassini, Russia's plenipotentiary, Sir Arthur Nicolson, and Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, well known as a political journalist and the author of a standard work on Russia. King Edward, the world's most able advocate of international friendship, had mentioned the possibility of an Agreement as long ago as 1904. In April of that year His Majesty was on a visit to Copenhagen, during which the news of the conclusion of the Entente Cordiale reached him. Meeting the Russian Minister in Denmark, M. Isvolsky, a few days later, at a luncheon at the British Legation, King Edward engaged him in a conversation that lasted three-quarters of an hour. He told him how the Anglo-French Agreement encouraged the hope that an analogous understanding might be reached with Russia. Sir Charles Hardinge, the King pointed out, had just reached St Petersburg with instructions to apply himself to improving Anglo-Russian relations. His Majesty had a copy of his conversation sent to

Lord Lansdowne for exclusive communication to Mr Balfour, the Prime Minister.[6]

Sir Edward Grey took up the project where Lord Lansdowne had left it. Since France and Russia were closely bound together by treaty, it was natural that our intimacy with France should lead us on to closer relations with her friend and ally. It had formerly been a cherished aspiration of British Liberals to end the conflict between us and our greatest Asiatic rival; and it had now been made possible to close it without the renunciation of any legitimate British interests. That Constantinople should ultimately fall into Russian hands was no longer held to constitute a danger to our route to India. The diplomacy of Kaiser Wilhelm, moreover, supplied the usual incentive to other Powers to unite in defence of their interests. His Turcophil utterances at Constantinople and Damascus were fuel to the flickering fire of Panislamism, and thrilled the bazaars of Central Asia, as well as making fanatical talk in the market-places of Cairo and Northern Africa. Russia felt her security threatened as much as Britain and France. The Kaiser seemed to forget that hundreds of thousands of Moslems owed allegiance to Tsar Nicholas. The Bagdad Railway scheme threatened to bring Germany to the gates of Persia and to endanger the dominating position of Russia and Britain.

In these circumstances it was not difficult for Sir Edward Grey to achieve a settlement with the Russian Empire, and an Agreement was signed on 31st August 1907. Both Powers agreed to leave Tibet unmolested. British influence over Afghanistan was recognised: Russia consenting to deal with the Ameer only through the medium of the British Government. India's north-eastern frontier was thus guaranteed. Furthermore, the Persian Gulf was recognised as being of special concern to Britain. Persia was divided into three spheres. In the southern Britain was to have a free hand: the northern and largest sphere was to be controlled by Russia: a

neutral zone intervened. Both Powers undertook to respect the independence of the Shah's dominions. The respective positions of Britain and Russia had been established in the course of many years' penetration; the Agreement was the official seal impressed on a situation created by individual enterprise.

It was a paradox that this Agreement with the greatest European autocracy should have been accomplished by the most democratic Government which Britain had ever possessed. It would probably not have been attainable by Sir Edward Grey had not Russia inaugurated parliamentary Government in May 1906. The first Duma, it is true, lasted only from 10th May till 21st July; and the second enjoyed an equally precarious existence for just three and a half months in 1907. But the form of constitutionalism helped to moderate a little the clamorous criticism of a group of socialists and pacifists who remembered only that Russia was the home of Secret Police, of spies, and of Cossacks, with whom any sort of association was, at that time, extremely repugnant. In itself the criticism of the British Minister's conciliatory policy was not effective; but it was made by persons who affected votes throughout the country which were important to a Liberal Government; and it was Sir Edward Grey's fate to count upon his political opponents for the steady support which his own extremist "followers" refused. He found it necessary to surround the negotiations with considerable mystery; and the conclusion of the Agreement was announced a few days after Parliament had risen.

The understanding with Russia was consecrated by a visit of King Edward to Reval in June 1908—the first visit of any British Sovereign to Russia. On the royal intention being announced, Mr O'Grady, of the Labour party, protested in the House of Commons. It was unfitting, he said, that a British King should visit a Sovereign who had sent a hundred members of his first Parliament to Siberia. Mr

Asquith, the Prime Minister, replied that Britain could not warrantably interfere in the internal matters of another country. Sir Edward Grey was fortunate in being able throughout his tenure of office to rely on the unswerving support of his Prime Minister and of his Sovereign.

# CHAPTER V

## BALKAN CRISIS, 1908-1909. BAGDAD RAILWAY

"Aus dem Angeborenen, aus dem alten Adam, der in unserem Fleische steckt, Können wir alle nicht heraus." BISMARCK.

(*Translation.*—"From what is inborn, from old Adam planted in our flesh, we none of us can get quit.")

### 1.

THERE has perhaps never been a British Foreign Minister so genuinely and devotedly attached to the cause of peace as Sir Edward Grey; and there has been none who has had such a series of menacing crises to confront. Three times at least during his term of office Europe was on the very verge of general hostilities, before the final catastrophe which devastated Europe and involved the world in war.

October 1908 was a particularly disturbed month. A big bombshell fell into the diplomatic world, which was followed by a series of minor explosions. Austria suddenly announced that she was annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina, two provinces inhabited by Serbs, forming part of the Turkish Empire in Europe, but administered since 1878 by Austria-Hungary. On 6th October Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria renounced the suzerainty of the Porte and proclaimed himself Tsar of all Bulgarians, which presumably included those who inhabited Macedonia as well as Bulgaria proper. On 7th October Crete declared itself independent of Turkey and united to Greece. On 8th October, Montenegro, adding a touch of comedy to a highly tragical situation, notified the Powers that she no longer felt herself bound by Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin—this mountain State of 6000 square miles, and with a population less than that of Sussex

or of Worcestershire, announced that she no longer intended to have her Adriatic coast unfortified or to deny herself the right to build a navy.

Insular in his outlook and his tastes Sir Edward Grey possibly had no very clear views as to the respective ambitions or rights of Montenegro, of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was happily not required to make up his mind upon them. Having concluded the Agreement with Russia in the previous year, his policy was determined for him. He supported the Russian view. To Russia, champion of the small Slav States, Austria's calm annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was intolerable. It was regarded as a direct challenge, in spite of a conditional consent given to Baron Aehrenthal by M. Isvolsky only a year before.

Fortunately for Grey the Russian view coincided with the cause of international morality, for which Britain stands — at any rate, her detractors would say, in all matters which do not affect her interests. To seize Bosnia and Herzegovina was a violation of the Treaty of Berlin. In Article 25 thereof Austria had undertaken to occupy and administer them in the interests of the peace of Europe. In an Agreement signed by the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman plenipotentiaries, it had been expressly stipulated that when the good administration of the provinces had been established they should be evacuated by Austria and restored to Turkey.

No change in the provisions of the Treaty were to be made without the consent of all its signatories. The maintenance of the *status quo* had become a shibboleth to the statesmen of Europe; indeed it betokened the weakness and the bankruptcy of their diplomacy. To maintain the *status quo* is to proclaim the arrest of political growth, to imitate Turks and Chinese in imposing political stagnation. It was idle to suppose that Austria-Hungary would administer two Turkish provinces in perpetuity for the benefit of others. Britain and America have done such things, but no other nations, as far as we know.

According to the principle of nationality Bosnia and Herzegovina should normally devolve to Serbia. On the other hand, according to the acquisitive principles of "realpolitik" which obtained in Europe, it was perfectly natural that Austria should definitely take over territory which she had successfully and beneficially administered for thirty years, and whose prosperity began with its transfer from Turkish to Austrian rule. Austria was engaged in "shifting her centre of gravity from Vienna to Budapest," as she had been bidden by Bismarck. She was becoming more preponderantly Slavonic, and taking a less influential part in Germanic affairs. The Heir-Apparent, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, even advocated the substitution of Trialism for Dualism—the erection of a Slav partner-State to take its place within the Hapsburg Monarchy by the side of Hungary and of Austria. The laws of evolution would anyhow bring Bosnia and Herzegovina ultimately to either Austria or Serbia — they could hardly remain for long a part of shrinking, receding Turkey.

It was reasonable, however, on the part of Britain and of Russia to protest against Austria's methods of procedure, and to call for an international conference. Britain had long lived on the friendliest terms with Austria, and it was a breach both of international law and of ordinary courtesy to take such a step without any previous consultation with any of the co-signatory Powers. The Austrian Ambassador in London, Count Pouilly-Mensdorff, was very popular in British society and enjoyed the friendship of King Edward, to whom he was distantly related. It was his duty to inform His Majesty of Austria's action by means of an autograph letter from the Emperor Franz Josef. He made the journey to Balmoral, where the King was in residence. His Majesty, having perused the letter, dismissed the Ambassador, contrary to his custom, without further friendly conversation; and then remarked to his British suite, "This letter was dictated."

2.

The man who had dictated the letter to the aged Hapsburg monarch was Baron Aehrenthal, a new force in Austrian politics. He was impregnated with the views of German "realpolitik." He was a Bohemian-German with a strain of Jewish blood, secretive, ambitious, and hard-working.[1] He was the antithesis of his predecessor, Count Goluchovski, an Austrian gentleman of the old school, genial and society-loving, honourable, without any particular ambition for himself or his country. Aehrenthal boasted that all was fair in diplomacy, and that "accomplished facts are the most conclusive proofs." He was contemptuous of British power in Europe, "What can England do to us?" was his favourite retort to British protests against his policy. To the British Ambassador, Sir Edward Goschen, he told a deliberate lie, when the latter inquired of him officially whether he had any knowledge of an impending proclamation of Bulgarian independence. Aehrenthal replied in the negative. A short while afterwards it became clear that the upstart statesman had arranged with Prince Ferdinand beforehand that their respective dramatic actions should synchronise; and it is satisfactory to record that Sir Edward Goschen took an opportunity to tax Baron von Aehrenthal with untruthfulness in the presence of several diplomatic witnesses.[1]

The annexation was received with exuberant joy in Austria-Hungary, where Aehrenthal was christened "The Austrian Bismarck." Serbia, small but undaunted, protested bitterly, and made ready for war. Anti-Austrian feeling ran high in Russia. Mobilisation began on both sides of the Austro-Russian frontier. Britain came forward as conciliator and upholder of international law. Sir Beethom Whitehead counselled prudence to the Serbs, Sir Fairfax Cartwright, who had succeeded Goschen in Vienna, urged moderation at the Ballplatz. Between them the British diplomats

seem to have edited most of the Notes which rapidly passed between Vienna and Belgrade. In St Petersburg we steadily supported Russia, until in March 1909 M. Isvolsky, suddenly capitulating, refused to support Serbia any longer. He purely and simply recognised the annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serbia was compelled by European diplomacy to sign a formula by which she declared she was "not affected in her rights by the events in Bosnia," and that she undertook "to modify her policy towards Austria-Hungary and to live henceforward in good neighbourly relations with that Power" — an undertaking that nobody who had studied the situation on the spot could regard as serious.

It cut straight against Jugo-Slav feeling, which was the most permanent political factor in the situation and made the settlement artificial and provisional. Austria meanwhile had agreed to pay Turkey the sum of £12,500,000, in Turkish gold for "the Vakuf properties" possessed by her in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus even the indemnity which Aehrenthal found himself driven to concede by Entente diplomacy was disguised as a tribute to Islam's vested rights.

The sudden appearance of the Kaiser "in shining armour" (to use his own words) by the side of his ally had been the principal cause of Russia's capitulation,[2] and had made France and Britain appear a little ridiculous as ineffective supporters of countries who were unable or unwilling to help themselves. It is probable that the efforts of Sir Edward Grey really averted war; and therefore the true victory was with Britain. But Bosnia and Herzegovina remained to Austria; and the flamboyant success, the spoils of victory, went to the "realpolitik" of the Central Powers.

## 3.

At the outset of the annexation crisis, Germany had been placed in an embarrassing position. Austria was her ally. But the German Government was somewhat

annoyed that Baron Aehrenthal had not thought necessary to consult it beforehand as to details of his political stroke. Moreover, Austria was thereby despoiling Turkey, and the Turks had been taken under Germany's special care. Germany was particularly anxious not to displease Turkey, because her position in Constantinople had been considerably shaken by recent events.

In July 1908 Turkey had caught the fever of reform which about this time was outwardly transforming Russia, Persia, and China into democratic States. A society of irreligious Ottoman Jews formed itself in Salonika for the purpose of reforming the Turkish Empire. They marched on Constantinople and succeeded in imposing on Sultan Abdul Hamid the form of a Liberal Constitution. It was a blow to German prestige, for the humiliated Sultan was by this time regarded as a personal friend of the Kaiser. When the Yildiz Kiosque was searched, on the occasion of Abdul Hamid's deposition a year later, a long and most amicable correspondence between the two sovereigns was discovered. Abdul Hamid was, moreover, forced to dismiss his Grand Vizier, Ferid Pasha, who has just been distinguished by receiving the order of the Black Eagle from William II. The Young Turks announced that they desired to regenerate the Ottoman Empire by their own exertions and would be able to dispense with German tutelage. The British flag, representing the ideal constitutional kingdom, was solemnly saluted at an officially organised fête. Crowds assembled before Britain's stately embassy on the heights of Pera and broke into a vociferous jargon of cheers. Without having moved a finger to gain such a position the British Ambassador found himself the most popular foreigner in Turkey.

He did not retain his glory long. The Young Turks showed themselves just as determined as their predecessors to maintain at all costs and by any means Moslem supremacy throughout their dominions. They asserted their authority in Adana by massacring the

Christians. They kept order in the Capital by the simple expedient of martial law. They championed the cause of reform with such an abundance of rhetoric that they did not understand why the British Government was unwilling to hand them over Egypt at once as a field for their beneficent schemes. They resented our support of Greece in the Cretan question. Their chauvinistic zeal led to a forward policy in the Persian Gulf, where some Turkish artillery bombarded the palace of the Sheikh of Mohammerah, who enjoyed British protection.

The British Ambassador found the Young Turk leaders unprincipled adventurers for the most part, little to his liking, and described them in conversation to a friend as "whipper-snappers whom he would not care to touch at the end of a barge pole." These nice scruples were not shared by Marschall von Bieberstein. He threw open the doors of the German Embassy to the young experimenters in Turkish reform. He entertained them lavishly. He flattered them. He bribed them. They had sore need of money. They also had need of ships; and he provided them with German cruisers which they paid for with borrowed German cash. He pointed out that German projects in Asia Minor were purely commercial. They veiled no territorial ambitions, as might be the case with Russia, with Britain the friend of Greece and of Bulgaria; with Italy even, to whom the coal-mines of Heraclea would be so valuable. The order was given to the German Press not to criticise the unconstitutional methods of the Young Turks, and silence was scrupulously observed on this fruitful topic of denunciation for the Press of other countries.

The German army, undoubtedly the most powerful in the world, had sent some of its best officers to train their Turkish friends. The German navy was easily the second greatest in Europe, and was growing steadily. Marschall von Bieberstein knew how to let glimpses be seen of his mailed fist in periods of silence between his flatteries and cajoleries. The political

gamblers from Salonika, struggling for their own position, sat round his lavish table, drank in his words of wisdom with his wine, and were satisfied where their personal interests lay.

It was a singular triumph for Germany's diplomacy at Constantinople that, although her ally Austria robbed Turkey of two provinces within three months of the Young Turk revolution, yet in less than two years Germany's prestige was as high as at the moment of its outbreak, and her authority was as unquestionably superior to that of Britain.

4.

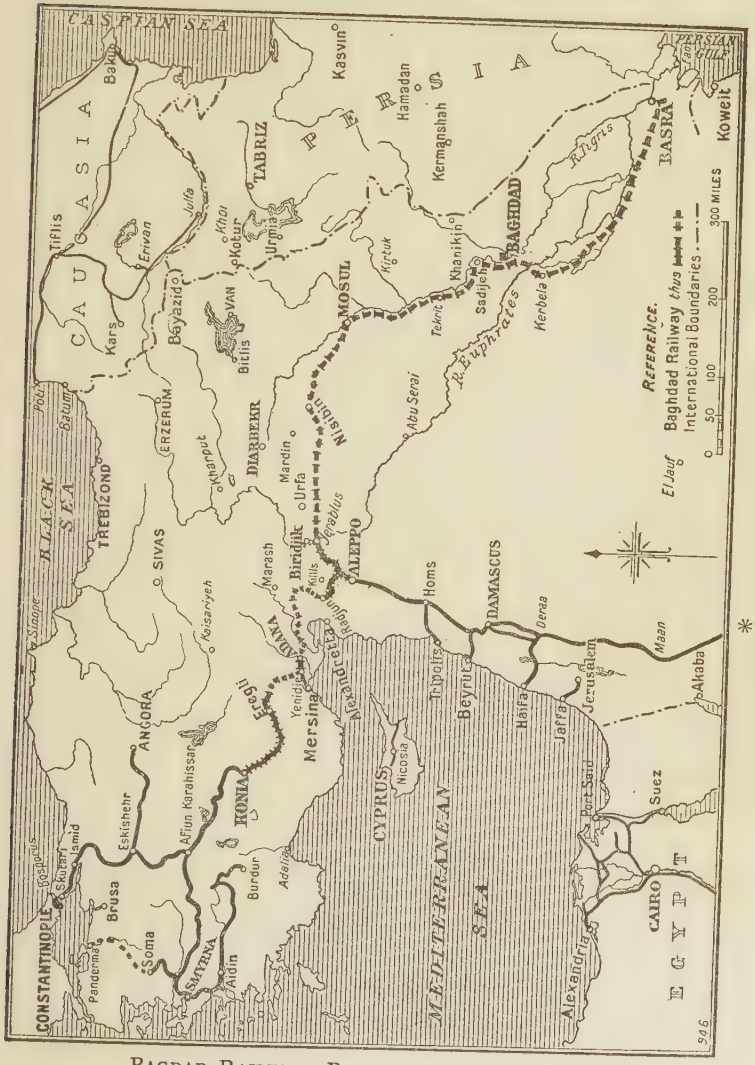
Germany had constituted herself our enemy in the East as well as in the West. The glamour of the Eastern world, with its riches and its slaves has often dazzled the eyes of Western despots. Napoleon said that he had missed his mission when Britain barred his access to the East at Acre and in Egypt. Charlemagne was fabled to have carried his victorious arms into the heart of Palestine. Alexander led his Greeks to the banks of the Indus. Kaiser Wilhelm thought on Barbarossa, who at the head of an immense Germanic host had set out on a crusade through nearer Asia, but had so unfortunately been drowned in a river of Pisidia; and he himself undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem under the ægis of Thomas Cook & Son. He was a crusader in modern guise. His conquests were to be commercially achieved. The most ambitious of all the Kaiser's schemes was the Bagdad railway.

We have already noticed the assiduous court which he paid to Sultan Abdul Hamid. He had only been for a few months on the throne when he made his first visit to Constantinople in 1889, and from that time onwards whatever the Sultan did, he knew he could count on the support of one European monarch. Germany set herself with painstaking and unscrupulous diplomacy to supplant Britain in the East. Germans know how to work for the future; they are content to

sow that their children may reap the fruits. Their plans are singularly deliberate and far-sighted.

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe had acquired an influence in Constantinople which had made of the grandest Grand Vizier a mouthpiece, and had secured for Britain an unchallenged prestige and commercial supremacy from Adrianople to the Persian Gulf. But with the solitary exception of Sir William White, who was at Constantinople from 1885 till 1891, we sent no other ambassador to the Porte of outstanding personality. Our great influence declined, and Germany's steadily grew. In 1857 we had actually obtained a concession for a railway to Basra, below the conference of the Tigris and Euphrates. But British capital had been attracted elsewhere. The scheme collapsed, though most of the earlier Turkish railways in Europe and Western Asia Minor were British built, and are the best in Turkey to-day.

What Stratford de Redcliffe and British capital might have achieved was now undertaken by Germany. A capable officer, von der Goltz, was sent to reorganise the Turkish army in 1883, and became all-powerful in military matters. An ambassador was appointed to Constantinople in 1897, who gained a position little inferior to that of the "Great Elchi" himself. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein was a man of commanding personality, an expert at manipulating the Press, and a bitter opponent of Britain. In addition to these qualifications for an ambassadorial post, he well understood that every German diplomatist was secondarily a commercial traveller. In 1903, after six years of persistent effort, he had the triumph of seeing an imperial firman published which authorised the construction of a railway from Konia to Bagdad, and thence to Basra. The terms conceded to the German banks were very favourable. Turkey engaged to pay an annuity of 11,000 francs for each kilometer constructed, and 4500 additional francs towards the expenses of operation. At the end of 99 years all rights and property of the operating company were




BAGDAD RAILWAY, BUILT AND PROJECTED, 1914.

Broken line, as in Mesopotamia and Taurus (between Radjun and Adana) indicates projected railway track.

* Hejaz railway to Medina and Mecca.

to revert to the Ottoman Government. Provision was made for the construction of numerous branch lines to places in Asia Minor, in Syria, and on the borders of Persia. The Company was to be allowed to establish ports on the Tigris at Bagdad, on the Shatt-el-Arab (as the Tigris and Euphrates are called after their junction) at Basra, and at some terminal point on the Persian Gulf. Finally, permission was granted to work all minerals found within twenty kilometers on each side of the railway, which was to traverse important oil-bearing regions in Mesopotamia.

Thus Germany was to dominate railway enterprise in Asia Minor. Germans would administer 3000 miles of track in a region of great resources in minerals, in forest and in oil, where the supremacy of British and Indian trade had long been unchallenged. Hundreds of thousands of Moslem pilgrims would be carried annually to their holy shrines in German carriages. A separate company, nominally Turkish, acquired the right to construct a line from Damascus to Medina and Mecca, by which further millions of British subjects would in time be conveyed to the Holy Places of the Hejaz. A glance at the map shows that this line, which was undoubtedly inspired by German influence at Constantinople, would incidentally render a Turkish invasion of Egypt possible. The complete restoration of Egypt was a reward held out to Turkey; herself to be Germany's vassal State in the East. The quickest route from the North Sea to Karachi was to be in the hands of Britain's rivals. From Constantinople and Smyrna to Mesopotamia and Southern Persia, in Egypt and the Persian Gulf, the British position was diplomatically assaulted by Germany.

5.

There has always been this difference between British and German diplomacy, that the Wilhelmstrasse has expected its diplomatists directly to further German commercial interests, whereas British diplo-

matists have not only not been instructed to do so, but have been discouraged by every Foreign Minister in succession from actively attending to the commercial enterprises of their countrymen. The British principle is probably right, for the true interests of a country are seldom or never furthered by allowing policy to be guided by considerations of commerce, which become inextricably involved in international industry and finance. But few will question that it is a duty of diplomacy to establish and maintain conditions favourable to the development of industry, and to support the rights of British merchants which have been legitimately established by private enterprise; and large British interests had actually been established in the territories and waters now coveted by Germany, both privately and officially. The Persian Gulf had been controlled for one hundred and fifty years for the benefit of all comers. German, Russian, and Turkish ships had ridden tranquilly at anchor in waters where navigation had never been safe before the coming of the British. We had charted, buoyed, and lighted the waters of the Gulf; we had swept away the nests of pirates; we suppressed gun-running and abolished the trade in slaves. Long years ago some British-built vessels had been supplied to the Pasha of Bagdad. The Turks are no sailors, and the Pasha could not find the necessary crews. So he called upon the British Resident to use them as he thought best for British interests. At another time the Sultan of Oman was preparing to prosecute by force a pecuniary claim against the Pasha of Bagdad, but the Ottoman authorities besought the good offices of the British Resident, and the matter was amicably settled by him at Bushire.

These pleasant, informal relations had perfectly satisfied the Turks of the old school, between whom and Englishmen there had subsisted a peculiar confidence. After the advent of German influence relations were changed. New and less gentlemanly figures dominated Turkish politics. The ancient trust was

undermined. Our traditional rights were challenged. Our prescriptive privileges were questioned. Good faith was required to yield place to written contracts.

British diplomacy was very slow to face the danger to its dominant position; and Germany in the year 1900 very nearly secured even her naval base on the Persian Gulf. She obtained the Sultan's consent for the lease of Koweit; but the Sheik of Koweit denied that he was a vassal of the Sultan. He was under the special protection of Britain. Only one year before, in 1899, he had signed a Convention with us by which, in return for British protection, he undertook not to cede any territory without our consent. The Turkish Government sent a gunboat which landed a party by night to raise the Turkish flag when nobody was awake. But they forgot the searchlights of the British fleet, and their design was frustrated.

Elsewhere the new Turkish spirit expressed itself in other challenges to British authority. In 1906 a Turkish infantry battalion seized the oasis of Tabah. Tabah is on the Egyptian frontier near the eastern head of the Red Sea. Maintaining that it was, by the Turco-Egyptian firman of 1892, Egyptian and not Turkish, Sir Edward Grey instructed the British Ambassador in Constantinople to present an ultimatum to the Porte demanding the withdrawal of the Turkish soldiers. Sir Nicholas O'Conor presented the ultimatum on 3rd May. Ten days was the time-limit. On 13th May the Porte had not yielded. Admiral Lord Charles Beresford led the Mediterranean fleet eastward out of Malta harbour; Prince Louis of Battenberg moved up the Ægean at the head of his cruiser squadron. The Atlantic fleet received orders to concentrate at Gibraltar. It was the diplomacy which Turks understand; and on 15th May the Sultan yielded.

Two years later, in 1908, the Young Turk Revolution in Constantinople appeared to give us our opportunity of re-establishing British ascendency in Turkey; but for causes which have been already mentioned, we

failed to take advantage of the opportunity. British diplomacy indeed relied solely on the private work and good fame of Englishmen in the East to maintain its prestige, and did little officially to defend our position against Germany's assaults. Only in 1913-1914 did it really bestir itself to save the remnants of British territorial influence. Sir Edward Grey invited the Turks to come to London to negotiate as to the construction of the final stretch of the Bagdad line, which was of course nominally a Turkish affair. The 1903 convention between Germany and the Ottoman Government had stipulated that a branch line was to be constructed from Basra "to a point on the Persian Gulf to be settled subsequently." Koweit was the only practicable place; and Britain had secured a protectorate over Koweit. This gave Sir Edward Grey an instrument with which to negotiate. He secured from Hakki Pasha, the Ottoman representative at the London negotiations, a definite assurance that no railway was to be continued beyond Basra without the consent of the British Government. Britain also obtained a written recognition of her prescriptive right to light, to buoy, and to police the Persian Gulf.

These arrangements were complemented by negotiations between London and Berlin, by which Britain undertook not to obstruct the Bagdad Railway system. British interests were to have the right to a 40 per cent. participation in the Company, which was to have two British Directors. We thus definitely accepted second place to Germany in that great scheme which was to transform the Asiatic dominions of the Sultan into a great German preserve.

6.

Our inferiority of prestige, of influence, and in the tactics of diplomacy was shown in the negotiations which preceded Turkey's entry into the Great War, when her support was secured by the Central Powers.

The British Ambassador was not at his post when

the European War commenced, and only reached Constantinople on 16th August. To judge by his own despatches we seem to have done extremely little to induce Turkey to come in on our side. We contented ourselves with begging her to be neutral. We promised in return for her neutrality that in regard to the Capitulations we should agree, in conjunction with our Allies, to withdraw our extra-territorial jurisdiction : we were further ready to give a written guarantee to respect the integrity and independence of Turkey. These negative offers were scouted by the Porte, which had asked that the Capitulations should be abolished : that delivery should be made of two battleships built for Turkey in British yards and commandeered by Britain on the outbreak of war with Germany : that interference in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire should be renounced : that Western Thrace should be given back to Turkey if Bulgaria should join the Triple Alliance : and that the Greek islands should be restored. Although the last stipulation was obviously an impossible one, since we could not emulate the Germans to the extent of bargaining to give away what did not belong to us, and some of the other demands were excessive, the Turkish proposals should at once have been accepted as a basis of discussion. Yet no real attempt was made to institute serious negotiations on these points. The bland assurances of the Grand Vizier, Said Halim, that Turkey's neutrality would in any case be maintained, were accepted as valid. But Said Halim exercised only a negligible control over the doings of his own Government.

The British Ambassador, on his return to London, leaving Turkey in the German camp, was congratulated by Sir Edward Grey on his "patience and discretion." When every device of intimidation and cajolery was being employed by Germany to bring Turkey in on the side of the Central Powers, when tremendous issues were hanging in the balance, not patience and discretion but quickness in decision, unshakable firmness

of purpose, and vigour in action would have been more profitable. Patience and discretion are not properly understood by Turks. They are qualities possessed in an eminent degree by the Armenians, and apparently act on their masters as a stimulant to massacre.

Meanwhile the German Ambassador, whose mentality was no doubt nearer akin to the Turks than was his British colleague's, was as prodigal of promises as of bribes. He suborned the Press and succeeded in making it almost unanimously anti-Entente. He leased a prominent shop-window in the neighbourhood of the Embassy, in which clever, delusive pictures and cartoons were exhibited to illustrate the invincibility of Germany and the nefarious designs on Turkey of Russia, France, and Britain.

These appeals cannot have failed greatly to influence the volatile, impressionable, unprincipled cosmopolitan crowds of Constantinople. To Turkish politicians, Baron Wangenheim (who had succeeded Marschall von Bieberstein at the German Embassy) addressed himself in other ways. He did not pray them to be neutral. He pointed out the material advantages to be gained by co-operation with the Central Powers, whose success was said to be assured, and indeed at that time (August, September, and October 1914) must have seemed extremely probable to all distant observers: Egypt would be restored to Turkey: India and the Moslem countries would be rallied by German influence to the Sultan, who might reasonably expect to become the head of the world's two hundred and twenty million Mohammedans: Germany would dominate the West, and her ally Turkey the East.

Numerous German officers and propagandists arrived in Constantinople, including a well-known agitator, Dr Prueffer, who had long been engaged in intrigues against Britain in Egypt, and was now accommodated at the German Embassy. Yet in spite of all the efforts of Teutonic diplomacy, the Sultan, the Heir-Apparent, the Grand Vizier, and actually a majority of the Ministry were reported by our

Ambassador to be pro-Entente, and but for one crowning blunder, for which the whole British Government must accept responsibility, it might still have been possible to win Turkey to our side.

During the three or four years immediately preceding the Great War, British firms had been engaged in the construction of two battleships for the Turkish navy, which, further, was being trained by British officers under Admiral Limpus. These two vessels, the *Sultan Osman* and *Reshadieh*, were of the very latest and most formidable type, and far exceeded in dimensions and armament anything yet possessed by Turkey in the course of her history. Great publicity was given to their acquisition by the Turkish Government, and to any visitor to Constantinople the enthusiasm roused among the populace by the proud thought of possessing them was unmistakable. Not a steamer plied between Therapia and the Capital without collections being made on board for payment of the new ships of war; not a street but contained exhortations to come to the assistance of an overstrained exchequer with voluntary subscriptions. Copious was the response to these appeals. Peasants sent in their savings, Greek, Armenian, and Ottoman subjects vied with one another in paying their tribute of loyalty to the Porte. The money was found; and Turkish crews had arrived in England to take back to Constantinople two of the finest Dreadnoughts in the world.

Turkey never received them. The war broke out, and they were commandeered by the British Government. The need of strengthening the British navy was held to override every other consideration. Yet a little reflection would have shown that we had it in our power ultimately to incorporate the vessels in our fleet without throwing away our best, and indeed our only, chance of securing the neutrality or the assistance of Turkey in the war. The ships should have been kept in gage. We had but few tokens with which to bargain. Fate placed in our hands two assets, worth in hard cash millions of pounds, but whose value

had been abnormally enhanced by the sentimental enthusiasm of the Turkish people. By merely withholding delivery we could have said to the Turks, "Come in on our side and you will have your warships at once." On the other hand, if the Turks had none the less decided to come in on the side of Germany, no one would have challenged for a moment the wisdom of then using the ships in the British navy—or rather trying to use them, for their specially designed fittings and gun-calibres made them after all unserviceable. By arbitrarily (though not illegally) seizing them at once we not only irremediably impaired our bargaining power, but we wounded the just susceptibilities of the Porte and the Turkish people, and gratuitously embarrassed the position of our friends in Constantinople.

An accident of war made this blunder definitely disastrous to our position. The German warships *Goeben* and *Breslau* were allowed to escape by our own Mediterranean squadron. They headed for the Bosphorus. Immediately on learning the news Wangenheim, with a swiftness of resolution and resource contrasting sharply with our diplomacy, hurried to the Porte and negotiated a bogus sale of the ships to Turkey. He was then able to inform them by wireless telegraphy, when they were still in the Ægean, that they could hoist the Turkish flag outside the Dardanelles and pass through to Constantinople as part of the Turkish navy! Their arrival determined the destiny of Turkey. Wangenheim was in a position assiduously to contrast the perfidy of Britain in withholding delivery of promised warships with Germany's swift provision for their deficiency: Germany was Turkey's friend in act as well as in word, and had made the Turkish navy stronger than the Russian Black Sea fleet. Meanwhile this very astute ambassador resisted all the endeavours of Britain's representatives to secure from the Porte the removal of the German crews. They donned fezes, and the vessels were renamed the *Sultan Selim* and the

*Medilli;* but they remained so completely under German orders that Wangenheim with their aid dominated Constantinople.[3] Thus ten days before the British Ambassador even arrived upon the scene his cause was lost. The counsels of Enver Pasha and the advocates of alliance with Germany prevailed in the Turkish Cabinet; the British case went almost by default; and the tragedy of Gallipoli followed.

# CHAPTER VI

## AGADIR, 1911. BALKAN WARS, 1912-1913

"'Tis the same with common natures:
Use 'em kindly, they rebel;
But be rough as nutmeg-graters,
And the rogues obey you well."

AARON HILL.

### 1.

ON 20th May 1911 there occurred at an aerodrome near Paris, an accident which had most unexpected consequences for France. The science of flying was then still young, and an aeroplane race to Madrid was an event which Cabinet Ministers thought it well to attend for the encouragement of air pioneers. The Prime Minister of the day, M. Monis, went down to Issy-les-Moulineaux at four o'clock in the morning to see the start, accompanied by the War Minister, his right hand man in the Cabinet. One of the airmen had great difficulty in starting his machine. When, finally, his aeroplane moved, it hardly rose, but swept in among the spectators. Its propeller mowed down and killed instantly the Minister for War, and struck M. Monis on the face and chest, causing him to fall senseless.

For some days the Prime Minister's condition was critical; he regained sufficient strength, however, to reassume control of the country's affairs, and he attempted to direct the policy of the Government from his sick-bed. But his position in office had never been very secure. His able but unscrupulous Minister of Finance, M. Caillaux, was an open rival for the premiership. For more than a month M. Monis

tried to superintend his Cabinet meetings by telephone from his bed. But maimed and tired, arguing with a recalcitrant Minister whose personality dominated colleagues in the Council Chamber from which his chief supporter had disappeared, M. Monis was taken at a disadvantage and resigned office. On 27th June 1911 M. Caillaux became Prime Minister of France.

Within four days, on 1st July, the German Government despatched the gunboat *Panther* to Agadir, an Atlantic port in the extreme south of Morocco, about five hundred miles south of Tangier. The reason given by the German Government for this act of theatrical sword-diplomacy deceived no one. At midday on 1st July the German Ambassadors presented to the various Foreign Offices of the Great Powers a communication in which it was stated that some German firms established in the south of Morocco had been alarmed by a certain ferment among the local tribes and had appealed for protection. A warship had therefore been sent to their assistance, and for watching over German interests, which were said to be considerable in those regions. As soon as "tranquillity should have returned to Morocco," the ship charged with "this protective mission" would leave the port of Agadir.

The diplomatic world was startled and alarmed. No reports of unrest had been received from that part of Morocco, and no one had ever before heard that German subjects were resident in or around Agadir. The despatch of a warship to a port which was known to be the most suitable for a naval station on that coast needed some other explanation.

## 2.

To find one, it is necessary to retrogress a little. In spite of the 123 Articles of the Algeciras Agreement, France and Germany had never ceased from quarrelling in Morocco. The Shereefian Empire, since the death of its last able Sultan, Mulaï Hassan,

had fallen into the miserable decay which has been the usual consequence of Islam's fatalistic rule.

Abd el Assiz thought to follow the ways of the West, but got no further than to become a keen photographer and to make a wonderful collection of watches. His tastes, moreover, became so extravagant that they only hastened the bankruptcy of his State. The French found themselves perpetually engaged in the onerous and thankless task of enforcing economic and administrative reforms. Revolts broke out and had to be quelled. The more duties France undertook, the deeper she became involved in native intrigues, and the further she had to extend her sway over unruly tribesmen. The pacification of Morocco, originally imposed on France by the Entente Cordiale, was proving a gigantic task. Was France undertaking it for the common benefit of Europe? To the jealous minds of Germany and Spain (who geographically had a closer interest in Morocco than any other Power) only one result of her activity appeared reasonable or even possible, namely, the establishment of a Protectorate. Spain and France came to a secret agreement in 1904 which apparently satisfied Spanish misgivings. Britain had no objection to seeing France as firmly established in Morocco as she herself was in Egypt. Germany alone continued to make difficulties. When Mulaï Hafid rose in arms against Abd el Aziz, his own brother, he was backed by Germany, and eventually succeeded in ousting him from the throne.

Sultan Mulaï's success helped the commercial position of Germans in his dominions. Germany's trade was never equal to half that of France nor to a third of Britain's, but France found it necessary, in 1909, to come to a special understanding with her. The compact bound France not to oppose German trade expansion, in return for which Germany admitted that France possessed "special political interests" in the country. It is important to note that it superseded the Act of Algeciras in the spirit if not actually

in the letter. It adumbrated the complete suzerainty of France; and it established virtually a Franco-German financial condominium to the detriment of other Powers.

Sir Edward Grey, however, approved the 1909 Agreement; although it is now almost certain, in the light of papers seized from the German agent in Morocco, Karl Ficke, who was shot as a spy in 1914, that the object of German diplomacy was from the vantage ground of this agreement to challenge France's position in Morocco, first commercially, and then politically, and ultimately to contest the rights accorded to her by the Entente Cordiale.[1]

Britain was, at first, saved from embarrassment by the accident that, one after another, the economic enterprises undertaken jointly by France and Germany, between 1909 and 1911, disastrously collapsed. Relations between the ill-assorted partners were only rendered more strained than before. Moreover, in the latter year, the tribal disturbances in the interior became so serious that France had to undertake military operations on a considerable scale. Fez, the almost inaccessible Capital, was cut off from all communication with the coast, and its European colony was supposed to be in danger. General Moinier advanced at the head of an expeditionary force, and eventually relieved Fez, where, however, he found things perfectly quiet and the Europeans unmolested. Germany believed, or pretended to believe, that the expedition to Fez was quite unnecessary, and that partition of Morocco between France and Spain was intended, and determined that in that eventuality she would also have her portion. She sent the *Panther* to Agadir to claim her place in the sun which shines upon Morocco.

Had Germany merely claimed the convocation of an European Conference, as in 1905, there would again have been considerable justification for her policy. France might perfectly well be charged with exceeding the rights conferred upon her by the Entente Cordiale

and sanctioned at Algeciras. But why send a warship? In any case Germany was hardly the State to uphold the sanctity of the Algeciras Act, or the rights of other countries; because she herself had been the first Power, by her 1909 Agreement with France, to go behind the common undertaking to keep the doors of Morocco open equally to the trade of all nations. Had she persistently pursued one policy she might have had Europe with her. But she at one moment allowed France a free hand in Morocco; at another she posed as the champion of internationalisation; at yet another she had attempted to exploit the resources of the Shereefian territory in jealous co-operation with France. While pretending to base her policy on principle, she was really adopting any policy that seemed likely to advance her interests, and attempting to win sympathy for her action by rummaging the pigeon-holes of diplomatic records for a label to attach to it.

Evidence of Germany's true intention in going to Agadir was provided by the testimony given on oath in a German Court of Law by the President of the Pan-German league, Herr Class. He stated that he was informed on 1st July at the Berlin Foreign Ministry by Herr Zimmermann, the Under Secretary, that the German Government had sent two *agents provocateurs* to Agadir, who had done their duty very well: that German firms had been induced to call upon the German Government for protection: that it was the Government's intention to seize the district, and that it would not give it up again. The German people absolutely required a settlement colony: possibly France would offer the Congo: but Germany did not require compensation elsewhere: she wanted a part of Morocco.

Germany was certainly in need of a coaling station on the route to her West African colonies.

3.

The whole proceeding was in complete accord with the character of Germany's New Foreign Minister, Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter. This disciple of Bismarck, like that great statesman's own son Herbert, could copy the manner of his master, but lacked his inspiration. The downright, occasionally brutal methods of Bismarck, exercised at a psychological moment, and usually in the service of legitimate German interests, became, in the hands of unworthy successors, the every-day methods senselessly adopted for unimportant purposes. It was thought by minor German diplomatists that the correct thing was to be vulgar, and that it was a sign of strength to defy social and diplomatic conventions. Herr von Kiderlen, himself by no means devoid of ability, was a heavy, strong, choleric man, with florid complexion and flabby cheeks. For several years he represented his country in Bucharest; and he always left his post on leave of absence in Germany for Christmas and the New Year, thus regularly missing the annual reception of diplomatists at a Court Ball; an occasion which for the Sovereign to whom he was accredited was the most important diplomatic function of the year, but which did not appear to the German Minister, as he was fond of telling Roumanian society, a sufficient cause for inconveniencing his holiday arrangements. The ladies of the Bucharest Diplomatic Corps found it impossible to pay visits to the German Legation, owing to the Minister's unblushingly immoral life; and the principal entertainments which occurred there were the so-called "beer evenings," to which the male members of the German colony were invited to re-enact the hilarious convivialities of their student days. Herr von Kiderlen desired nothing better than to have his name associated with a policy of "blood and iron." During the Morocco affair he remarked about the man with whom he was carrying on delicate negotiations at the time:

"The German Government is in a splendid position. M. Cambon (the French Ambassador in Berlin) is wriggling before me like a worm."

4.

M. Caillaux was a French counterpart to the Berlin Pistol. He belonged to the group of international financiers who have their headquarters in Paris, but who are not particularly French in sympathy; who usually maintain, in fact, a pretty close understanding with Berlin. In the years immediately preceding the war, French capital was actually financing German armament industries, including the firm of Krupp's; and M. Caillaux's subsequent career has shown that during the greatest crisis through which his country has ever passed he was engaged in unauthorised negotiations with the friends of his country's enemies. He chose as his Foreign Minister in 1911 a prefect of the Seine, M. de Selves, who had no experience of foreign affairs, and had indeed no political experience beyond such as may be gained in a municipal career. It was surmised at the time that M. Caillaux intended to pursue his own foreign policy, which would have ended in the disruption of the Entente Cordiale. Sir Francis Bertie, the British Ambassador, was fortunately a man with great force of character. He declined to see M. Caillaux. In the whole course of his tenure of office the French Prime Minister was never officially visited by Sir Francis Bertie, who, on the other hand, saw M. de Selves regularly. He coached him in the affairs of Europe, and gave him with power and lucidity the views of the British Government. M. de Selves on his part was at any rate a good Frenchman, and more accurately reflected the feelings of his countrymen than did the Prime Minister.

Sir Edward Grey's view was, as usual, simple and unwavering. He supported France. He reminded the German Ambassador in London, Count Wolff-Metternich, of the obligations which we had incurred

towards France in Morocco: we could not be disinterested: a new situation had been created by the despatch of the German warship to its coast: future developments might affect British interests more directly than they had hitherto been affected: we could not recognise any new arrangements that might be come to without us.

On the other hand, Sir Edward declined to fall in with a French proposal that British and French cruisers should be sent to Agadir to keep company with the *Panther*. He found it, however, extremely difficult to ascertain the exact trend of the ensuing Franco-German negotiations, which were conducted chiefly in Berlin behind closed doors. There was much talk in the German Press of "compensations" to Germany. Compensations for what? What was to be surrendered by France? The Germanophil Prime Minister was not a source of enlightenment. German diplomatists were not likely to take us into their confidence. It was learned casually that Germany had demanded the greater part of French Congo, and that France had refused the demand. The warship remained at Agadir. The situation between France and Germany became very strained.

Sir Edward Grey decided to act. On 21st July Mr Lloyd-George was to speak before the Bankers' Association in London, and he was commissioned by the Prime Minister and Sir Edward Grey to use emphatic language. "If a situation were to be forced upon us," he therefore declared, "in which peace could only be preserved by allowing Britain to be treated, where her interests are vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the cabinet of nations, then, I say emphatically, that a peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure. The security of our great international trade is no Party question. Germany on the Atlantic coast would not suit us." Such language from the lips of Mr Lloyd-George, who was regarded as the most pacific and demagogic member of the Ministry, was a

sharp warning. Three days later, on 24th July, Count Wolff-Metternich gave Sir Edward Grey a definite assurance that Germany had no thought of procuring a naval harbour on the coast of Morocco and had no design on Moroccan territory. He gave the undertaking ungraciously, and refused the British Minister permission to convey his assurance to Parliament: that would seem like a retreat before the threats of Mr Lloyd-George, and it was nothing of the sort. Sir Edward Grey himself described the Ambassador's communication as "exceedingly stiff in tone."

Agadir had now become a matter of prestige, and therefore dangerous to good relations between the Governments of Britain and Germany. The days between 25th and 27th July were difficult; but on the latter date Count Metternich made a further communication, this time "exceedingly friendly" in tone, and Sir Edward Grey was able to inform Parliament that no British interests were affected by the arrangement which France and Germany were about to reach.

Yet it was not till 4th November (1911) that Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter and M. Jules Cambon at last reached a settlement; even then the negotiations might have continued longer but for the weakness, crippling to both parties, of the international money-market. The domineering Minister had found in the Ambassador a negotiator who combined toughness of fibre with Gallic agility of intellect, and had been compelled to change his tone from bluster to bargaining. France had, of recent years, been a diplomatic suppliant before Germany; the Agadir incident marked a turning-point, and from July 1911 we note a renascence of French national spirit.

5.

By the terms of the settlement, France was allowed to establish her Protectorate in Morocco, and ceded in exchange to Germany two large slices of the French Congo, which made a connection between the German Cameroons and Belgian Congo. It was a better bargain

for France than at one time she seemed likely to get. Public opinion was, nevertheless, dissatisfied; and the Government tried to turn aside indignation by giving out that the surrendered territory consisted chiefly of fever stricken swamps; which was not the case.

Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter, on his part, boasted to a friend[2] that he "had sent a warship to Agadir and had gained 100,000 miles of territory." This was literally true. The Agadir incident provided the last of a series of successes for post-Bismarckian sword-rattling diplomacy. Since 1905, when he had celebrated the overthrow of a French Minister by making Count Bülow a Prince, the Kaiser had stood sword in hand by Austria while she violated the Treaty of Berlin; Britain and France, rather than fight, had given way; before the Agadir episode they gave way again, in the spring of this year 1911, in Syria, where Germany was allowed the right to construct a branch line of the Bagdad Railway to Alexandretta, and to acquire privileges over the port which made it practically German. She had grasped the truth that diplomatic professions, which a country is not prepared to support by arms, have little value. But she made the psychological miscalculation of supposing that because other countries yielded to the threat of force on secondary matters, they would refuse to take up arms in defence of vital interests. The Kaiser lacked the prudent wisdom of Cæsar Augustus, of whom Gibbon writes that he considered a military force as the "firmest foundation," but wisely rejected it as a "very odious instrument," of government.[3] Sword-diplomacy is dangerous to its practitioners in that it leads them to presume upon the acquiescence of opponents and to underrate the spirit of nations which, like the British, are infinitely complaisant, but which can be roused to fight in a vital cause with inextinguishable ardour. Kiderlen-Wächter had calculated well the moment to strike his blow. The French army had not yet recovered its efficiency after several years of "pacifist"

administration which had impaired its discipline; there were perpetual strikes on the railways and elsewhere, and throughout the summer of 1911 serious riots occurred among the vine-growing population. They had a Prime Minister whose patriotism was suspect to many Frenchmen. Britain was convulsed with the struggle between the Lords and Commons over Mr Lloyd-George's Budget proposals. Yet the result of Germany's violent diplomacy was to stiffen French national feeling, and to produce a non-Party speech from Mr Lloyd-George; at that time a remarkable event.

The German Minister's satisfaction at the result of the negotiations was by no means shared by his countrymen. Britain was savagely attacked by the Berlin Press. The Colonial Minister resigned rather than defend the Treaty before the Reichstag. The leader of the Conservative Party, which consisted chiefly of Junkers, chauvinistic landowners of North-East Prussia, declared in the course of the debate that "they now knew who it was who lay claim to world-domination . . . who the enemy was . . . they would secure peace not by concessions, but with the German sword." The Crown Prince was in the gallery of the Reichstag at the time, and actually departed from parliamentary and international decorum so far as to applaud this fiery harangue. General Bernhardi, author of *Germany and the Next War*, wrote about this time: "Our relations with Islam have changed for the worse by the abandonment of Morocco. . . . We have lost prestige in the whole Mahommedan world, which is a matter of the first importance for us."

6.

What Ireland is to a British Prime Minister the Balkans have been in the past, and Poland probably will be in the future, to our Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs. Fervid nationalism, an unpractical sense of large possibilities, a yearning for the unattain-

able, and a ready recourse to violence make them perpetual fountains of unrest and a standing danger to their neighbours.

But in 1912 the Balkan States could put forward a good defence to the charge of disturbing the peace of Europe. Year after year Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece had hoped for betterment of the condition of their nationals who lived under Turkish rule in Macedonia, and year after year their hopes were disappointed. The Great Powers propounded scheme after scheme, and continually "brought pressure to bear" upon the Porte; but the Sultan sat sardonically smiling in the Yildiz Kiosque, and played off the ambition of one Power against the greed of another. One of the few measures which had brought relief to the oppressed Christian nationalities was the introduction of European gendarmerie officers, and even these were withdrawn in 1908 with a blind belief in the professions of the Young Turks. The methods of the Young Turks soon showed a strange similarity to those of the Old Turks. They were the more resented in that they were more efficient; and the nationalist zeal of the Ottoman Empire's regenerators began a process of turcification which was a new horror to the Christian rayahs.

No help coming from Western Europe the Balkan States decided to help themselves. They agreed to forego their own rival ambitions and racial animosities. Each alone was incapable of defeating Turkey: together they might force her to grant autonomy to Macedonia. Preliminary negotiations were conducted in profound secrecy. The two chief promoters of alliance were M. Gueschoff and M. Venizelos, Prime Ministers respectively of Bulgaria and of Greece. They employed as intermediary Mr J. D. Bourchier, the *Times* Correspondent in the Balkan Peninsula, who travelled regularly in the course of his ordinary duties between Sofia and Athens. M. Gueshoff met the Serbian Prime Minister in a train on the line between Sofia and Belgrade on 11th October 1911.

One of the chief difficulties they had to contend with was the opposition of the Bulgarian monarch, who knew that a Bulgarian agreement with Serbia would be most distasteful to Austria-Hungary. After some months, however, His Majesty's consent was obtained. Secret treaties of alliance were signed, to which Montenegro also became a party. The allies were encouraged by the fact that Turkey had been engaged

BALKAN FRONTIERS, OCTOBER 1912
(Before war against Turkey).

in an enfeebling war with Italy over Tripoli since September 1911. They took the occasion of a fresh massacre of Macedonian Christians in September 1912 to demand the actual application of reforms prescribed by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, and the reconstruction of frontiers according to racial needs. The European chanceries were startled at their boldness. Austria and Russia offered friendly intervention, which was declined. Thereupon the Powers collectively forbade the Balkan States to make war, and solemnly warned

them that in any case no changes of boundary would be tolerated. Their Metternichian devotion to the *status quo* was disregarded. Montenegro, with an army of 30,000 flouted Europe and declared war on Turkey on 8th October. The Porte declared war on Bulgaria and Serbia on 17th October. On the following day Greece joined in with her war-declaration, of which, however, the Turks, retaining a spark of haughty disdain for those whom they had long regarded as slaves, took no notice, the Turkish Minister in Athens regretting his inability "to forward such a document to Constantinople"; and for a time the Ottoman commander-in-chief paid no attention to the movements of the Greek armies.

The Turks' confidence in their own military prowess was based upon a past record of successful wars and a present training by German officers, and was shared by most European observers. Yet the military power of one of the former great fighting races of the world collapsed completely before the blows of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece. In fight after fight the Turkish troops were beaten and swept back to the very gates of Constantinople. The Bulgarian victory of Lule Burgas sealed the doom of Turkey in Europe. The rotten rule of a corrupt oligarchy broke before the onward sweep of new and vigorous communities. Four small States came near to accomplishing in six weeks the expulsion of the Turk "bag and baggage" from Europe, which for scores of years had fired the imagination and defied the efforts of the world's Great Powers.

7.

The enthusiasm for their feat was unbounded in Britain, where considerable sympathy for Bulgaria had been fostered by the Balkan Committee. As soon as an armistice had been imposed on Turkey, delegates of the allies came to London to arrange the final terms of peace. They were treated as heroes, but unfortunately failed to act up to the parts allotted

to them by the exuberance of their hosts. They soon squabbled among themselves.

For some time, however, they were taken very seriously; and negotiations presided over by Sir Edward Grey were opened between them and the Turkish representatives on 16th December. On 24th January 1913 came news of a revolution in Turkey, which dismissed the Ministry and put in power at the head of the warlike faction the bombastic, ambitious Enver Bey. Reshid Pasha, head of the Turkish mission, was disowned; and on 1st February the principal Balkan delegates left London to resume the war. Adrianople, Scutari, and Janina, which Turkish garrisons had gallantly held through the winter months, were all captured by the end of April 1913, and peace negotiations were then resumed in London.

8.

Once more it became apparent that serious differences existed between the Balkan States themselves, and the Turks in London tried to take advantage of them by arranging secret meetings with separate members of the allies. Sir Edward Grey exerted the whole of his great influence to compose difficulties and assuage susceptibilities. Finally he used some brutally plain language, and told the discordant allies that unless they meant to sign peace there did not seem any need for their further presence in London. The hint was taken, and a Treaty was signed on 30th May 1913.

The island of Crete and all Turkish territory on the mainland of Europe "situated west of a line to be drawn from Enos (on the Ægean) to Midia" (on the Black Sea) was to be ceded to the Balkan allies. The delimitation of the Enos-Midia line was to be carried out by an International Commission of the Great Powers. (See map on following page.)

The quarrels over the spoils which had smouldered in London broke into open flame as soon as the allies' representatives returned to the Balkans. On

BALKAN WARS—TREATY OF LONDON, 30TH MAY, 1913.

11th June 1913 the Russian Tsar sent a telegram to the Kings of Serbia and Bulgaria warning them that whichever declared war upon the other would forfeit the Imperial sympathy. The only result was that hostilities were begun (by Bulgaria) without any declaration of war at all. The Bulgarians are a dour and grasping people, disliked by all their neighbours. Not only Serbia and Greece, therefore, but Roumania turned upon the unpopular Bulgars and reduced them to complete impotence. The Turks availed themselves of the opportunity to emerge from behind the Tchatalja lines to which the Bulgars had driven them, and to re-occupy Adrianople, which was many miles north of the Enos-Midia line.

9.

Bulgarian action had been inspired by Austro-Hungarian diplomacy. The sweeping success of the Balkan States had been a grievous blow to the Central Powers. Germany's protégés had been soundly beaten. To Austria the augmented power and prestige of Serbia had appeared nothing less than a catastrophe. Despite the meaningless formula of 1909 which Serbia had signed with the Powers looking over her shoulder, her relations with Austria had become yearly more embittered. When, therefore, in November 1912 a victorious Serb army entered the Turco-Albanian port of Durazzo, on the Adriatic, Austria obtained from the Powers an order for their immediate withdrawal and the abandonment of all conquests in Albania. That behest, as some observers noted at the time, made war between Serbia and Austria a certainty in the future; and it was the primary cause of a quarrel between Serbia and Bulgaria. It deprived the Serbs of what was to be the best part of their spoils of victory. They were thrown back to demand in compensation more territory in Macedonia, which could only be obtained at the expense of the Bulgarians.

Austria's high-handed action almost provoked war

with Russia, which has a closer sympathy with the Serbs than with any other of the Near-Eastern peoples. Austria mobilised 900,000 men, and the spectre of a general war loomed large. A war between the Great Powers was the paramount danger of the Balkan situation. It was commonly held by competent judges that a general European war would be an inevitable consequence of war in the Near East. The diplomacy of the Powers was therefore rather directed towards preventing a collision of their own interests than to obtaining a just solution of the Balkan question. In April 1913 the situation became extremely critical once more owing to another peremptory demand of Austria's. The Montenegrins had occupied Scutari, in the north of Albania. As Count Berchtold, Austria's new Foreign Minister, had ordered the Serbs out of Durazzo, so he now ordered their kinsmen the Montenegrins out of Scutari, which was the centre of Austrian influence in Albania. The forbearance of Russia and the mediation of Britain alone prevented the outbreak of a general war. British cruisers were actually despatched to the Albanian coasts to overawe Montenegro, and Scutari was occupied by international troops. This force was put under Colonel Phillips, commanding the British contingent, a tribute to British character and to British policy, for Colonel Phillips was not the senior officer present.

The prestige of Britain rose very high during these two years of Balkan crises. We had the advantage of disinterestedness; and we possessed a statesman whose high-mindedness gained the trust of all his foreign colleagues. More than once Sir Edward Grey, acting as mediator, saved the peace of Europe. The Balkan leaders, as we have seen, chose London as their meeting place. The British Capital had been made the diplomatic Capital of Europe by Sir Edward Grey. In December 1912 he had constituted an areopagus of ambassadors, consisting of the five representatives of the Great Powers and himself. In frequent meetings they took joint decisions on the Balkan problems as

they arose. Instead of six Foreign Ministers dealing in six different European Capitals with thirty separate ambassadors, who in their turn communicated with their own Foreign Ministers, each Power agreed to give the discussion of Balkan matters into the hands of its London representative. Sir Edward Grey alone of the areopagites was a Plenipotentiary; the others had to refer points back to their home Ministers; but the time saved was considerable. Matters which are discussed by different minds in different places easily produce off-shoots. Questions which might have grown into complicated and embittered disputes were settled with promptitude. Such, for instance, was the future of Albania, where Austrian and Italian rivalry for influence was very keen.

The puritanical austerity which he seemed to draw from the stern repression of his own desires gave Sir Edward Grey an influence over both the assemblies of ambassadors and of Balkan delegates which made observers compare his authority to that of Bismarck at the Berlin Congress. He made no brilliant sallies or unexpected suggestions. There was nothing explosive or scintillating in his personality. In the midst of excitement his imperturbability never failed. He gained an ascendency as great as that which he exercised in the House of Commons. He seemed to treat the European Conference in the manner of a specialist. He diagnosed the case, and gave his view.[4] His decisions were not freely expressed; they were usually accepted without demur. Tributes were even paid to his pacific efforts by Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter and by Herr von Jagow, who succeeded the former as German Foreign Minister in December 1912. His speech in Parliament on 12th August 1913, reviewing the work of the Concert and expressing belief in its efficiency, was received with applause in all the European Capitals. At home he was rewarded by his Sovereign with the bestowal of a K.G., an honour never conferred upon a commoner since the days of Sir Robert Walpole.

But, paradoxical though it sound, Sir Edward Grey's very success was a danger. He made concord appear where no concord was. There was no representative at the London Conference of the Berlin camarilla which ruled the Kaiser. Moltke and Ludendorff procured from a restive Reichstag a special levy of a thousand million marks for military purposes while it was sitting, in March 1913. Count Mensdorff, the Austrian Ambassador, was a steady and sincere supporter of Sir Edward Grey in the London meetings. But he did not truly represent the Ballplatz. Count Berchtold was as prone to nefarious projects as Count Aehrenthal had been. Signor Giolitti, the Italian statesman, has revealed the fact that Austria secretly proposed to Italy joint military action against Serbia in August 1913. A diplomatist's character is not complete without the ingredient of suspicion; and suspicion was nowhere to be found in Sir Edward Grey's composition. His force of character and sincerity influenced people to desire and to work for peace; and he was deceived by his success with the diplomatists who surrounded him. The unanimity which he seemed to have established in London was ineffective where he was not present. It had been decided, for instance, that Albania should become an independent State. In reality it remained a wrestling ground between Austria and Italy. The rivalry of these two countries permeated their minutest acts. So keen were both States to establish political supremacy that both their diplomatic representatives arrived in Durazzo before the Prince to whom they were accredited. When the new ruler had eventually landed from his yacht, a sharp dispute arose as to which of the two diplomats was to present his credentials first. The difficulty was resolved by both agreeing to await the arrival of the next foreign representative. Each jealously watched the movements of the other lest he should steal a march upon him. Eventually a Roumanian *Chef de Mission* arrived. He was allowed to be the first foreign Minister to pay his respects to

the Prince of Albania and became the doyen of the diplomatic corps.[5]

According to the Treaty signed in London on 30th May 1913, the new boundary of Turkey in Europe was to be delimited by a Commission of the Great Powers. Accordingly representatives were sent out for the purpose. When they approached the Turkish Government on the subject of their task they were confronted with a singular and unexpected argument. The Porte had agreed that the line should be drawn from Enos to Midia: the Powers had not stipulated, however, that the line should be a straight one! The Turkish Government therefore proposed that it should describe a semicircle so as to include Adrianople. This ingenious contention baffled the distinguished officers who had been sent to represent the Great Powers, and they philandered the summer through by the pleasant waters of Therapia, without making an attempt to get the boundary marked.[6] One of those unfortunate interregnums which so often occur between the retirement of one ambassador and the appointment of his successor left the British Embassy in the hands of a Chargé d'Affaires who, whatever his ability, never commands the same influence as the fully empowered representative. Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons showed that he fully understood the limits of diplomacy. "It is not for us to use the language of threats," he said, "unless we are ourselves contemplating separate coercive measures, and I use no such language." Especially idle would it have been to use threatening language when Turkey could count on the support of one at least of the Great Powers in resisting the will of Europe. Germany's position in Constantinople, rudely shaken by the overthrow of Turkey's German-trained armies in 1912, was almost entirely restored when Enver Bey effected his revolution at the beginning of the next year. Enver had been Turkish military attaché in Berlin, and was a devoted adherent of German *realpolitik*. By overturning (in January) the

Turkish Government which was about to sign in London a very unfavourable peace he staved off the dissolution of Turkey. Germany worked steadily for the maintenance of a large Turkish Empire, which she herself was exploiting more and more. Baron Wangenheim did not, like his colleagues, urge the Turks to withdraw behind the Enos-Midia line. Turkey therefore retained her Adrianople frontier, which she regularised with Bulgaria a few months later. Once more a "final" decision of the Powers was totally and swiftly disannulled.

Flouted in turn by Montenegro, by the Balkan Allies conjointly, by Bulgaria separately, and lastly by moribund Turkey, the Great Powers grudgingly acquiesced in the Treaty of Bucharest (10th August 1913), whereby the Balkan States rearranged their own frontiers. The Continental members of the Concert contented themselves with trying to get as much credit for the settlement as they could. Kaiser Wilhelm despatched a telegram to King Carol of Roumania in which he congratulated his Hohenzollern kinsman on the result, and mentioned his satisfaction at having contributed to the work of peace. He rejoiced at their "mutual co-operation." The flattery was intended to keep Roumania within the ambit of the Central Powers, from which she had shown signs of escaping. It was another point gained by Berlin's diplomacy that a German officer, William of Wied, should be nominated first Prince of Albania. Britain sent no telegram of congratulation to King Carol, and no Minister to Durazzo. Sir Edward Grey regarded these occasions with comparative indifference. Yet they exhibited Germany as still the restless schemer. They were small but significant indications that behind and beyond the friendlier atmosphere which his untiring efforts had created in London and Berlin, the jealous enmity of rivals had not been lulled.

# CHAPTER VII

## 1914

"Whenever any principle or power, be it what it may, aims at unlimited supremacy in Europe, some vigorous resistance to it, having its origin in the deepest springs of human nature, invariably arises."

Sir EDWARD CREASY, 1852.

"We, William, Kaiser, planted on the throne
By heaven's grace, but chiefly by Our own,
Do deign to speak. Then let the earth be dumb,
And other nations cease their senseless hum."

OWEN SEAMAN, 1896.

### 1.

A FEW years before the war the author was present, in the British Embassy at Berlin, at a conversation which took place between his father and the British Ambassador, of which he has preserved a vivid recollection :—

*Sir John Kennedy.*—"Have you read those articles by Austin Harrison which have been appearing in the *Observer?* They seem to me to be rather good."

*The Ambassador.*—"Those articles preaching war between England and Germany, do you mean?"

*Sir John Kennedy.*—"Well, they're on the relations between us and Germany. They say they're very bad and pretty well bound to lead to war."

*The Ambassador.*—"Stuff and nonsense. That is just the sort of journalistic rubbish that is my chief difficulty. Relations between England and Germany are inflamed by that sort of stuff. If only the Press could be suppressed our relations would be perfectly good."

On the Ambassador's writing table was a photograph of William II., on which the Kaiser had written above his signature: "They say what they say; let them say." Britain's representative almost seemed to take his cue from the Kaiser's words. He was treated by the Kaiser as a personal friend. The Emperor visited him in bed more than once, having reached the Embassy before its incumbent had got up; and conveyed a pleasing sense of intimacy by discussing State affairs seated in the neighbourhood of the ambassadorial toes.

It is a disadvantage to the public service that diplomats, living perpetually abroad,[1] not only lose touch with the public opinion of their own country but also, if they remain long at the same post, unconsciously assimilate the outlook of the country where they reside. In both cases, too, the views they chiefly imbibe are those of officials and not those of the general public. It is painful to contrast the British envoy's testy assurances of the Germans' goodwill with their subsequent acts, which not only Mr Austin Harrison but many other publicists, such as Dr Emil Reich and Mr Leo Maxse, foretold with accuracy. Not one of these writers wished for war; but from a close observation of German policy and the tendencies of public opinion they foresaw its probability. To foresee a danger is not to create it. Precautions are not threats. The statement of facts is not an insult. King Edward at any rate did not think so. He actually called people's attention to Dr Reich's book,[2] *Germany's Swelled Head*, in which the Anglo-Hungarian professor set forth with intimate clearness the prevalent conviction of Germans that their country was destined to be the world's greatest Power; an ambition that she could certainly not realise without first dominating Europe, and then supplanting Britain in the rest of the world.

2.

Ever since the Boer War, Germans had thought Britain decadent. They had been equally surprised at our difficulty in overcoming Boer resistance, as at our grief over losses in human life. They believed we should not stand the strain of a Continental war, an impression which was hardened by our subsequent refusal to adopt Lord Roberts's scheme of universal national service. We preferred to do our fighting with "mercenaries." Professor Treitschke had long taught that the world was to belong to the ablest race, the Germanic; and professors had a most penetrating influence in Germany. They were the drill sergeants of the mind, and exercised the same sort of authority over students as non-commissioned officers over private soldiers. They used to dwell upon our clumsiness in organisation. It was positively a world-interest that Germany should take over the British Empire! In English hands it was a haphazard motley of States, bound neither to each other nor to the mother country except by custom and sentiment: any one might be detached, by accident or by design: there was no machinery for unified action: it would be Germany's congenial task to transform it into a great solidified unity, organised for commerce and for war, an unbreakable instrument for imposing German culture upon an expectant world. They were the strong and growing people, we, pleasure loving, slothful, stationary. Politicians and generals agreed with the philosophers. "England is being smothered in its own fat," said Herbert Bismarck in 1899, "and is no longer capable of any severe exertion."[3] The synonym of life was strife: a nation which would not strive was a dying one. General Bernhardi in his famous book, *World-power or Collapse*, preached the beauty of war.

The aspirations of Germany were not altogether unnatural. She had a growing and a most industrious population. She wanted, nay she needed to expand.

She had arrived late in the world, when most of its fertile places had been snapped up. Wherever her traders tried to make an opening for German goods, they found the British flag, or at any rate a long-established colony of British merchants. Her economic wants were imperious. They could only be satisfied by ousting those who had forestalled them. British sailors under Elizabeth had been the world's buccaneers, and Britain had reaped the reward of their rapacity. Germany had the money to build a fleet with which to defend her commerce, and why should she not make it as big as she liked? Yet the moment it came within measurable distance of Britain's those arrogant islanders protested, and suggested that both sides should suspend building—thus to perpetuate Germany's inferiority: at the very moment when Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman was inviting Germany to a disarmament Conference at the Hague (1907), British yards were building warships for Brazil, Turkey, and probably other countries, which, as all the world knew, could be seized in case of need. So what matter to England if she did not build ships for herself? The British were proverbial hypocrites: all Englishmen might have the right to be united under the British flag, in whatever part of the world it flew: if Germany desired to unite the Teutonic race under the German flag, it was Pan-Germanism and dangerous to the peace of Europe.

The hypocrisy of British policy has not always been an easy charge to rebut, and the envious Germans perceived it everywhere. They saw it especially in the diplomacy of King Edward. They could not understand his genuine fondness for travelling. Every time he made a journey to a European Capital it was to weave another thread into his web of coalition against Germany. What they called his *Einkreisungspolitik* (hemming-in policy) became an obsession to the authorities of the Wilhelmstrasse, and especially to the Emperor himself—for whom, to the last, his uncle was a sorcerer of diplomatic wiles. On the

margin of a memorandum to his Imperial Chancellor on 30th July 1914, he paid him the tribute of writing: "Edward VII. is dead, but he is still stronger than I, who am alive." It was in vain that King Edward included Berlin in his travels, and met the Kaiser at Wilhelmshöhe in 1907, at Cronberg in 1906 and again in 1908. His Majesty was known not to entertain any particular affection for his nephew—so his visits were hypocritical manifestations of sentiments he did not feel. The Germans are apt to judge the mentality of others by their own, and there was a strong histrionic strain in their own monarch which, when exercised with a political purpose, became indistinguishable from humbug. His entry into Jerusalem on a horse, his flamboyant gesture at Tangier, his make-up as the Dutch Prince William of Nassau, from whom he claimed descent, were the poses of a political actor. Hardly other was his parade of grief at the funeral of King Edward, whose dislike of him was believed to be reciprocal. He apparently inherited the well-known lachrymatory powers, as well as more masculine talents, from his ancestor Frederick the Great. In the following year (1911) when he attended the inauguration of the monument to Queen Victoria, he brought with him to London an additional and unexpected private secretary, whom police investigations in 1914 disclosed as director of the German spy system in the United Kingdom.[4] Yet when a retired ambassador wrote an article in a well-known magazine, casting aspersions on the sincerity and the methods of the Kaiser's policy, he was sharply reprimanded by the Foreign Office, and informed that a repetition of the offence might result in the withdrawal of his pension.[5]

The German Press systematically inculcated anti-English sentiments into the German mind. The Navy League, which possessed over a million members, and held meetings all over Germany, openly pointed to England as the enemy. It decorated the walls even of small up-country railway stations in South Germany

with tabular cartoons showing the relative strength, actual and prospective, of the British and German navies. The German mind is of a peculiar composition, difficult to analyse. Independent, analytical, and often profound in the realm of theory, it is yet docile to authority. It produces excellent historians; yet it consents to the prostitution of history to the service of the State. The thoroughness with which history teaching was coloured with an anti-British tone educated German youth to an unquestioning belief in their country's mission of supplanting the British Empire. The pupilage of the German public is evident to all travellers. The State control of the details of everyday life affords constant surprises to foreigners. In Dresden bye-laws regulated the hours at which carpets might be beaten or piano-playing practised. A booklet of bye-laws was issued to all owners of bicycles regulating, among many other details, the ringing of the bell when riding in the streets.

With such a Government, and such a public, the Press became a State institution of formidable power. It was an executive part of the bureaucratic machine, and moulded public opinion to suit national policy. Newspaper representatives called daily at the Press-bureau of the Foreign Office, from which they were excluded if the attitude of their newspapers became disobedient. Public opinion became a handy weapon of diplomacy. Yet so discreetly was the control exercised that official authority for inspired suggestion, rebuke, indignation, or *ballons d'essai* could always be disavowed. Ready-made articles were actually purveyed to newspapers, inserted without alteration, and then denounced as inflammatory by the officials who had composed them.

Non-official forces which also counted for more than official spokesmen in pre-war Germany were the great industrial magnates, shippers, engineers, and bankers, who planned political railways and initiated the German policy of economic penetration in South America, Asia Minor, China, and Morocco.[6] Well might King

Edward, with his usual perspicacity, exclaim, "I only wish I could find out who it is who really governs in Germany."

3.

It is not necessary now to recapitulate every manifestation of hostility to Britain in German policy, which contradicted flagrantly her many official declarations of friendship. The strivings of new Germany were embodied in the Kaiser. For all the anomalies of his character he was animated throughout his career by the desire to aggrandise Germany. He dismissed Bismarck who had become too cautious. He declared that Germany's future lay on the water, and fostered the navy. He favoured Colonial expansion. He befriended the great industrialists, and was not loth to be Germany's most effective "commercial traveller." He transformed Germany from an European State into a world-Power. "Nothing must be settled in this world," he exclaimed at the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the Kingdom of Prussia, "without the intervention of Germany and of the German Emperor"; and he accordingly asserted his authority in China and South Africa, in Morocco, in Venezuela, and Brazil. Mystic and mediæval, he was also intensely modern and materialistic; he appreciated the arts of peace, but chiefly an ancillary to the supreme art of war.[7] It would probably be an exaggeration to say that he deliberately worked for war against Britain; but he set in force motions which he could not afterwards arrest. In the last tremendous moments before the peace of the world collapsed he vacillated between urging on the hounds of war and trying desperately to call them back. Like all unstable minds he was unduly influenced by his surroundings. At a German national ceremony he was so aggressively patriotic as to be almost undisguisedly anti-British; on his visits to England he was the exuberant friend of Britain. It was foretold of him as far back as 1891, by a Portuguese

writer, de Queiroz, that this "dilettante of activities" would end his days either as the greatest monarch of all times, or "in degraded exile" in England.[8]

All Germans, to be sure, did not hate all Englishmen. But the atmosphere in which they lived bred fear and mistrust of British policy, and the determination to challenge it. Our position in the world was a constant irritant to them. They fought our commerce doggedly, unremittingly, with every resource which forethought could suggest or science contrive; and their success became a formidable threat to our supremacy. Germany's mercantile marine increased 100 per cent. in steam tonnage in seven years; and the world-wide effects of her growth and her activity were rapid and startling. By the commercial penetration of Turkey German trade increased tenfold in the Ottoman dominions between 1889 and 1912; and to Germany political ascendency was the normal concomitant of commercial penetration.

This combination of policy with trade was in itself a challenge to the British Empire and a cause of international diplomatic struggle; and any political strife in which Germany was engaged was apt to engender war. In the past Prussia had always achieved her ends by force. Under Bismarck Prussia had not been merged in Germany; Germany had been Prussianised. Frederick the Great, in the words of Lord Rosebery, had become the Patron Saint of Germany. Ever since he wantonly seized Silesia and despoiled Poland, perfidy and violence had become stock weapons of Prussian diplomacy. Bismarck had used them in Schleswig-Holstein with brilliant results. His successors had nothing but words to show that they did not think they were still perfectly legitimate weapons. If other countries chose to change their coat-of-mail for a starched shirt, they would serve all the better. In 1905, 1909, and 1911 the German sword was not drawn only because to rattle it had proved sufficient.[9]

The aggressive intentions of Germany were correctly

gauged by many public men—notably by M.P.'s and candidates for Parliament, almost all Unionists, who on public platforms frankly confessed their belief that Germany would make war as soon as the Kiel canal had been sufficiently widened to hold her fleet—(which was actually the case in midsummer 1914). More than one extreme Socialist also held this conviction; and the late Mr H. M. Hyndman was turned out of the International Socialist Bureau in 1910 because he persisted in saying, in *The Times* and elsewhere, that Germany was preparing for war against France and England. Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, now British Ambassador in Paris, placed it on record at the Foreign Office, several years before 1914, that the German preparations for war would reach the flash-point by the end of 1913.[10] General Baden-Powell's detective sense prognosticated war as the logical effect of opposed and competitive causes. Field-Marshal Lord Roberts pointed out the German danger in speech after speech, and bade the country arm itself adequately for the inevitable struggle. In the House of Lords on 23rd November 1908 he referred to Germany by name throughout his speech; he opined that an invasion of our shores was not impossible: he pointed out that an army landed in England would be supported by a highly-developed spy-service organised among 180,000 German subjects in Britain: our navy would be tied to home waters by the inadequacy of our army to defend the mother country: our diplomacy in these circumstances was not in a position to assert itself.

4.

In the eyes of most Englishmen, then, a struggle between the two countries was inevitable. We could not shirk the issue raised by Germany. A frank acceptance of the challenge alone might have prevented the war which appeared only too likely to be its outcome.

In the winter of 1912-1913 Sir Edward Grey attained the height of his power. His authority in Europe was unquestioned. At home he had the general support of both the chief Parties of State. Not only was Britain's position in Europe stronger than it had been since the time of Lord Salisbury; Germany's was weaker. Her hectoring methods in the various crises had disgusted other countries [11] and alienated Italy, the political barometer of Europe; and the Triple Alliance was thus virtually amputated of a limb. The defeat of Turkey, the rise of Austria's enemy Serbia, the gradual recovery of Russia very seriously diminished Germany's prestige. Doubtful friends prepared to take their leave. A by-product of the Entente Cordiale had been a better understanding between France and Spain, and between Spain and Britain, who were brought into closer relationship by the love of King Alfonso for England and his marriage to an English Princess. In the winter of 1912-1913 Britain's position was dominant. Sir Edward Grey was strong enough to meet the German challenge. But instead of asserting Britain's point of view he made a series of attempts to satisfy Germany's demands and to win her confidence. He had already, in February 1912, sent his friend Lord Haldane to Berlin in order to reconcile, if possible, admitted dissimilarities of outlook between the two Governments. Lord Haldane saw the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, on the first day of his visit; on the second he saw the Kaiser and von Tirpitz, Lord High Admiral, together; on the third he saw the Chancellor again. He discussed every possible formula of peace. "The High Contracting parties assured each other mutually of their desire of peace and friendship." "They would not join in any combinations or design against each other for purposes of aggression." "If either party became entangled in a war in which it could not be said to be the aggressor, the other party would at least observe towards the Power so entangled a benevolent neutrality." Germany, however, always insisted that the duty of neutrality

should not apply, if it were not reconcilable with existing agreements. She also insisted that the making of new agreements rendering it impossible to observe neutrality towards the other party should be excluded. Lord Haldane realised that such an arrangement was calculated to prevent us from assisting France, but would not tie Germany's hands, because the Triple Alliance, being already an existing Treaty, would absolve Germany from observing neutrality. Germany could arrange that the formal inception of hostilities should rest with Austria; she would then become "entangled"; and Britain, pledged to neutrality, would have to stand aside.

Lord Haldane's mission would have been valuable if our Government had accepted its lesson that German rivalry was ineluctable. But the failure of Germany's best friend in the Cabinet did not wean Sir Edward Grey from his peaceful endeavours; and his policy during the next two years reached the very border-line where conciliatoriness becomes placation of enemies by the sacrifice of national interests. He took a hand himself at the composition of formulas, and spent the early part of the summer of that year (1912) in exchanging phrases with the German Ambassador in London which should ensure peace between the two rivals. England undertook not to become a party to any treaty, understanding, or combination which had as its object aggression upon Germany; she solemnly undertook to make no unprovoked attack on Germany. Count Metternich's attitude made it clear that the whole object of any arrangement Germany might make was to secure a pledge of British neutrality. Germany knew that to a man of Sir Edward's character such an agreement would be absolutely binding, and sought to take advantage of his good faith to pinion Britain to inactivity. The negotiations only established beyond cavil the conflict of aims and methods. Germany would never voluntarily consent to restrict her naval growth or her Colonial expansion. True reciprocity

was impossible. We had everything that Germany coveted, but she had nothing to give us in return.

Sir Edward Grey did consent as we have seen (Chapter IV., Appendix) to informal discussions between the naval and military General Staffs of Britain and France on the measures to be taken in the event "of an unprovoked attack by a third Power"; with the stipulation that such discussion or resultant agreement was "not to be based upon an engagement to co-operate in war." But he carried complaisance to Germany very far when, during the Balkan crisis in the ensuing winter of 1912-1913, he went out of his way to render a service to the Central Powers by sending British warships to coerce Montenegro in the interest of Austria. Montenegro had conquered Scutari. Both she and Austria coveted northern Albania. Neither's claim was a good one, Montenegro's incomparably the better. Yet for the sake of accord between the Powers the British Minister approved and participated in a policy of dragooning the weak. The Germans may almost have begun to think that they had made a notable convert to their theory that small States had no business to exist.

For one brief moment, indeed, Sir Edward Grey seemed almost to have despaired of European morality. Speaking in the House of Commons after the Balkan crisis was safely past (12th August 1913) he ruefully exclaimed: "Every State, it seems to me, connected with the war in the Balkans in the last few weeks has, with a disregard of treaties, agreements, or alliances set itself in its own way to take advantage, or attempt to take advantage, of the situation. . . ." Europe was being seduced to the view that Prussianism paid.

But Briton's Foreign Secretary was soon fraternising again with Prussia's representative. When Prince Lichnowsky succeeded Wolff-Metternich as ambassador in London, he was invited to begin conversations on all outstanding differences between Britain and Germany. Avoiding fundamental matters, we made a bargain about the terminus of the Bagdad Railway.

We proposed to extend the Anglo-German agreement regarding an eventual partition of the Portuguese colonies—this discussion, however, seemed rather too intimate to France, and we agreed to discontinue it. More general and immediate interests were delicately broached. Of Prince Lichnowsky's good faith there has never been any question. He was a Polish country gentleman, with healthy outdoor tastes, and genuinely Anglophil. His personal desire was for cordial relations between Germany and Britain. His selection by the Wilhelmstrasse was clever delusion. He had but to be himself. The greater his sincerity the more complete would be the deception, the more effectually would Sir Edward Grey be lulled into serenity. The Berlin Foreign Office paid little attention to his labours. They preferred to rely on the activities and the reports of his Counsellor of Embassy, Herr von Kühlmann, a "Realpolitiker," versed in the arts of subterranean diplomacy, and a steadfast enemy of England.

Sublimely unsuspicious, Sir Edward Grey continued his efforts to avoid war by proffering friendship, and his earnest sincerity impressed even the Germans. They were not sure that this Englishman was a hypocrite after all. Their newspapers had continually repeated the supposition that every time he went off on a fishing holiday he was really taking a mysterious part in clandestine negotiations against Germany. They began to admit that he might genuinely enjoy fishing. They reluctantly acknowledged that he had helped to preserve the peace during the embarrassing crises caused by the Balkan Wars, a peace which Germany was equally anxious with Britain to maintain, both because she desired the preservation of Turkey, and because her own warlike preparations were not complete.[12] Grey was ready to attribute their efforts to more disinterested motives; and he effected such an improvement in official Anglo-German relations, that they were better in 1914 than for several years past.

5.

But official friendliness did not check for a moment Germany's preparations for war, nor her anti-British propaganda in India, in Egypt, and in Ireland; nor abate her hostility in many distant parts of the world. In the course of the war several of her agents revealed themselves for the first time in their true colours. A prominent example was Sir Roger Casement, consul in H.M. service, who had become half-crazed in his passion for Irish independence. His hyperbolic official reports from the Congo on Belgian atrocities in the early years of Sir Edward Grey's tenure of office had driven King Leopold of Belgium to the belief that England was purposely engineering an agitation to oust him from that lucrative region in order to acquire it herself. His Majesty became so incensed against the British Government that if he had still been on the throne in 1914 he might very probably have made no opposition to the passage of a German army through Belgium. And when he was transferred as Consul to Rio de Janeiro, Casement became the intimate associate of only one colleague—the German Consul-General; and he soon very nearly had us embroiled with the United States over more atrocities, this time in Putumayo. To have involved Britain in a quarrel with the Monroe doctrine at a moment when America's friendship would be particularly welcome to us would have exactly suited Germany.[13] In return for his services his German employers landed him, during the war, from a submarine on the coast of Ireland; and a supply of rusty rifles captured from the Russians followed, with which he was to conduct a rebellion against the United Kingdom.

To Sir Edward Grey diplomacy was a close preserve, and he displayed to the end an almost pathetic trust in official assurances. For him professional diplomatists could not lie. On 2nd August 1914 the German

Ambassador in Brussels gave an official assurance that Germany did not intend to invade Belgium. The Foreign Office seems to have felt no further alarm on this subject, until a few hours later the same Ambassador presented a Note to the Belgian Government asking permission for German troops to "march into" Belgium.[14] The British Minister's almost abject devotion to peace encouraged the German belief that we had lost all relish for war. We had avoided fighting in Europe since the Crimean War; several of the present British Government had disapproved the Boer War, and in any case the nation had felt its strain unduly, and the British Army had shown itself incompetent. It was logical that Britain would not take part in a Continental War.

6.

Sir Edward Grey was very ready to do anything that could honourably be done to preserve peace, except to fight for it. But it is not enough to be an advocate of peace, of justice, of liberty, of decent behaviour in international affairs; the law of self-sacrifice demands that a country be ready to fight in support of its professions. If these ideals do not find their champions, opposite principles, force without scruples, and disregard of ethical considerations in international affairs will prevail. When the crisis came, Britain was prepared to fight for her ideals, which corresponded to her interests, and the world should have known it. Grey conveyed an opposite impression—and left the attitude of this country in doubt up to the very last moment. On Sunday, 2nd August 1914, no man could say for certain what policy Britain was going to pursue. The importance which Germany attached to securing our neutrality during the 1912 negotiations, the fury of the German Chancellor when, at the famous interview of 4th August 1914, he learned from the British Ambassador that Britain was after all to become an armed adversary, the whole teaching of the military

school that the eventual struggle with the British Empire should be preceded by German domination of Europe, betokened the immense difference it would make to Germany if we did not go to war. Under Lord Salisbury such a question could hardly have arisen; on every occasion when the interests or the honour of the country were seriously affected it showed itself unmistakably ready to fight in their defence.

Sir Edward Grey was, indeed, a member of a different Party, which contained many extreme pacifists; and he was criticised almost to the end in their organs for his "opposition" to Germany. But he had the support of the Conservatives (giving him a majority in Parliament); and in a speech delivered some years before the war he indicated his true line of policy, which he did not pursue. Speaking on the mischief of the great growth of armaments, he said: "There are those who think it will lead to war, because it is becoming intolerable. I think it is much more likely the burden will be dissipated by internal revolution—by the revolt of masses of men against taxation. . . . When you begin to make hunger by taxation, then you will be within measurable distance of a revolt which will put a stop to it." He ought to have fought for peace with every diplomatic weapon which the nation possessed, with our military armour lying ready and burnished in the background. He ought to have listened to Lord Roberts rather than Lord Haldane. "Force, force to the utmost," exclaimed that great idealist, President Wilson, at Baltimore, on 6th April 1918, "force without stint or limit, the righteous and triumphant force which shall make right the law of the world, and cast every selfish dominion down in the dust." The majority of Englishmen realised the necessity enunciated by Mr Wilson several years earlier, though they did not proclaim it so eloquently. We had to yield place to Prussianism or defeat it. We could have stood the strain of a peace-war longer than Germany. The Social-Democrats, hostile to the Imperial policy of aggression, though easily gulled into acquiescence, had

become the most numerous Party in the Reichstag. In the 1912 elections they had captured Potsdam. Their great successes were certainly a reason why the war-clique in Berlin precipitated hostilities. It believed that a social crash might come at any moment and its power be ended.

Not only was some sort of social or constitutional crisis probable in Germany; a financial crash was almost certain. Her economic strength had long been overstrained; with her inflated credit any creditors' pay-day might have brought disaster to the banks. Before 1914 Germany had made all her wars pay. She was forced to make war, or to face a financial collapse.

At the battle of Spion Kop, the British troops, after long hours of fierce fighting on that stark, uncovered hill, were recalled under cover of night. They were believed by the British Commander to be exhausted. He did not know that the Boers were so exhausted and discouraged that General Botha was actually also preparing to evacuate. The Boer leader suddenly learned, to his astonishment, at the very moment of despair, that his was a victory and not a defeat. Had we clung to our position through the night, the key to Ladysmith would have remained in our hands, and not the Boers'. The fight between Britain and Germany—political, economic, and ethical—would have been fierce and exhausting. It would not have been one-tenth so exhausting, it would not have been ghastly as the war which took its place. Britain, with her incomparable resources and her Continental friendships, would have outstayed Germany as she outstayed her militarily. It is not the duty of diplomacy to shirk conflict; but to make it political instead of military. Sir Edward Grey, great Englishman that he was, did not completely represent the British character. Most Britons are not so wholly devoted to peace. They have something of the soldier in them, as Kitchener's army proved. There was nothing of the soldier in Grey. Force is still the only argument

which some nations understand, though their number grows happily smaller. A living cause is still one for which people are ready to die.

On 31st July 1914, at 1.30 A.M., M. Jules Cambon, French Ambassador in Berlin, sent the following telegram to his Government, marked "very urgent": "L'attitude hésitante du Gouvernement anglais est de nature à entrainer les plus terribles conséquences, car ici on envisage avec espoir de succès la lutte contre la France et la Russie, et elles sont seules. Il n'y a que l'éventualité de l'intervention de l'Angleterre qui émeuve l'Empereur, son gouvernement et tous les intérêts . . . l'annonce de cette intervention est donc de nature à avoir un effet préventif." [15]

Then it was too late. The attitude of Britain should have left no room for doubt. An announcement, if announcement were necessary, was at least two years overdue.

## 7.

The assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo on 28th June 1914 was the occasion, though not the cause, of the outbreak of the greatest war of modern history, as the pulling of the trigger is the occasion rather than the cause of propelling a bullet from a loaded rifle. The chain of events from the Archduke's murder to Britain's declaration of war on 4th August was as follows :—

The assassins were Serbs, but subjects of Austria. The Austrian Foreign Office at once tried to saddle responsibility for the crime on the Serbian Government. Belgrade absolutely denied all knowledge of the plot; and there is actually some warrant for the supposition that the murder was connived at not by the Serbian Government but by the Austrian.[16] In any case it was denounced in Vienna as part of a pan-Slav conspiracy against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Strong action — a "punitive expedition" — against Serbia was decided on, and German approval was obtained. On 5th July Kaiser Wilhelm, after a Council

at Potsdam which was attended by his military and naval chiefs, by the captains of German industry, and by a few statesmen, authorised the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin to inform the Emperor Franz Josef that he could reckon upon the fullest support of Germany.

On 22nd July the Austrian Ambassador officially communicated to the Berlin Foreign Office the text of a Note to Serbia, which had already been sent to Belgrade. Its terms, however, it is now known, were "unofficially" submitted to Germany before they were despatched from Vienna.[17] The Note was delivered to the Serbian Government by Austria's representative on 23rd. It made demands which were incompatible with Serbia's independence, and requested unconditional acceptance within forty-eight hours. The Serbian Government was required to publish in its official journal on 26th July a declaration expressing regret that its officials should have been engaged in propaganda against Austria: and it had to undertake to remove all army officers and civil functionaries whom Austria should indicate as being guilty of propaganda against the Hapsburg Monarchy, and to accept the collaboration of Austrian representatives in the suppression of the subversive movement, of which the Austro-Hungarian Government professed to have proofs: Austrian delegates were to take part in the investigation on Serbian territory into the Sarajevo plot.

The Note was a reflection of the intense dislike and fear of Serbia's growing power which was felt in Vienna. Copies were communicated to the various European Foreign Offices next day (24th July). Sir Edward Grey commented that he had never before seen one State address to another independent State "a document of so formidable a character."

Russia naturally, as chief Slav State and Austria's rival, felt more keenly in the matter than Britain. She urged Serbia "to make all the concessions compatible with her dignity;" but M. Sazonoff, her Foreign

Minister, insisted to the German and Austrian Ambassadors in St Petersburg that the question was international, and not merely one between Austria and Serbia: Russia could not stand aside and see injustice done to Serbia.[18] Russia's loyalty was thus an essential link in the chain between the murder of the Archduke and Britain's participation in the war; but her tone was moderate; and she pleaded for an extension of the time-limit.

Before the forty-eight hours expired, the Serbian Government presented to the Austrian Minister in Belgrade, Baron von Giesl, an acceptance of all the Austrian points except two. This reply was handed in at 5.58 P.M. on the 25th. By 6.30 P.M. the Austrian Minister was in the train for Vienna, having broken off diplomatic relations. The Austrian Legation at Belgrade was some considerable way from the station, so Baron von Giesl can hardly have had time even properly to read the Serbian reply. "The sudden, brusque, and peremptory character of the Austrian *démarche* makes it almost inevitable that in a very short time both Russia and Austria will have mobilised against each other," was Sir Edward Grey's comment in a telegraphic despatch to the British Ambassador in St Petersburg. He was right. Austria mobilised early on 31st July. Later on the same day Russia issued her mobilisation order.

That same evening Germany sent a stiff demand for demobilisation within twelve hours to St Petersburg; at the same time she asked France to inform her within eighteen hours whether she would remain neutral in the event of a Russo-German War.

Germany, it must be noted, had already put herself in a state of *kriegsgefahr* (war-danger) which, while it was not in theory mobilisation, in fact made her army better prepared for war than mobilisation did in Russia, where railway communication and general army organisation were both markedly inferior.[19]

Russia proceeded with her mobilisation; whereupon the Kaiser declared war upon her next day (1st August).

On that same day France replied to Germany's inquiry that she would do "that which her interests dictated." When war had been declared on Russia by Germany, France no longer had any choice; she was bound by the secret Military Conventions of the Dual Alliance to come to the assistance of her ally. She did not declare war, however, for before she had got her ultimatum ready she received the Kaiser's declaration of war (3rd August, 6.45 P.M.).

Earlier on the same day German troops had entered Belgium without the consent of the Belgian Government. King Albert had been invited to allow Germany a free passage through her territory; he had refused and had appealed to Britain. The news of the German demand and the King's appeal reached Downing Street just before Sir Edward Grey was to address the House of Commons. In his speech there he stated that we were not parties to the Franco-Russian Alliance, of which we did not know the exact terms, and that there was no binding compact with France. On the other hand, though Grey did not explicitly say so, the Cabinet had resolved that the independence of Belgium should be a test question. In his speech he said, "If in a crisis like this we ran away from those obligations of honour and interest as regards the Belgian Treaty (of 1839, whereby Britain, France, Prussia, and other Powers had guaranteed Belgium's independence), I doubt whether whatever material force we might have at the end, it would be of much value in face of the respect we should have lost"—slipshod wording; but it expressed the sentiments of the country. Most Englishmen felt that their honour and interests were both involved in the menace to the safety of France and Belgium: that a reckoning with Germany had to come some day: that it was better to settle the quarrel at once in company with friends than later alone: and that the German invasion of Belgium was a piece of unblushing and infamous aggression. The summing up of a private soldier was the complement of Sir Edward Grey's: "The Kaiser 'e wants stopping."

At 11 P.M. on 3rd August the Foreign Secretary sent off his ultimatum to Berlin with an aching heart ;[20] and a fortnight later the British soldier entrained for France with a ditty on his lips.

## 8.

Sir Edward Grey's labours to avert war during the week from 28th July to 3rd August must have prostrated a man of only ordinary physical and mental fitness. By day and by night there was a feverish exchange of messages and views by telephone and telegraph, by cable and courier, crossing and recrossing one another, circuiting and being duplicated, repeated, interpreted, and misconstrued in every Chancery in Europe, each one of which found a terminal in the British Foreign Office. Throughout Sir Edward Grey never allowed side-issues to displace in his mind essential factors. His judgment remained alert, his vision unblurred. No specious arguments misled him ; no enticement of expediency dulled his sense of Britain's honour ; and in him Britain stood forth, at a supreme crisis in the world's history, as a champion of right in international affairs.

As an illustration of the hourly burden that he had to carry, we will give a short epitome of his business on one single day (Friday, 31st July).

A great part of the morning was taken up with a Cabinet meeting, and a visit of the German Ambassador. In the afternoon his work on despatches was interrupted by a most important visit from M. Cambon, to which reference will be made.

When he arrived at the Foreign Office from his house in Queen Anne's Gate he found waiting for him a copy of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, sent by messenger from the British Embassy in Vienna. This, we may imagine, did not detain him long, since a full telegraphic summary had already been received.

The next message received (following the order in the British Blue-book) was a telegraphic despatch

from Sir Rennell Rodd, Ambassador in Rome, to the effect that the Italian Foreign Minister believed that Germany was now disposed to give more conciliatory advice to Austria, having become convinced that England would act with France and Russia, and being most anxious to avoid issue with England. This telegram was dated the day before (30th).

Next came a telegram, also of the 30th, from Berlin, in which Sir Edward Goschen stated that the Foreign Minister (Jagow) had asked the Austrian Government what would satisfy them, as the most direct way of answering Grey's suggestion that Germany should propose a method of mediation: no reply from Vienna yet.

Another telegram from Sir Edward Goschen followed, dated 31st. The German Chancellor, who was just going to see the Kaiser, had hinted that Germany might have to take "some very serious step," perhaps that day, regarding Russian mobilisation. Russian mobilisation had seriously hampered Germany's efforts to influence Vienna.

Then a third telegram from Goschen. He had read to the Chancellor Sir Edward Grey's refusal of Germany's proposed neutrality bargain (whereby two days before Germany had tried to secure our neutrality in return for the promise that nothing of France proper, apart from the colonies, would be annexed). The Chancellor was so dazed with the news of what was happening on the Russian frontier that he accepted Goschen's communication without comment.

At this moment, apparently, occurred Prince Lichnowsky's visit, and Sir Edward Grey directly after it sent off a telegram to the British Ambassador in St Petersburg, Sir George Buchanan, to apprise him that he had just learned that conversations had taken place in Vienna between the Austrian Foreign Minister and Russian Ambassador, and that similar conversations had been authorised in St Petersburg. This was the result of suggestions made by the German Government (in response presumably to

Grey's request to them, already referred to). The telegram was a long one and went into the numbers of the troops mobilised by Russia. Buchanan was instructed to inform the Russian Foreign Minister that Sir Edward Grey earnestly hoped that he would encourage these conversations. He added that he had informed the German Ambassador that he could not see how Russia could be urged to suspend her military preparations, unless some limit were put by Austria to the advance of her troops into Serbia.

Encouraged by this news of conversations between Russia and Austria, the British Secretary also telegraphed to Sir E. Goschen, hoping they might dispel Austrian mistrust of Serbian assurances and Russian mistrust of Austrian designs on Serbia's independence.

He made a further proposal, as to which Goschen was told to sound the German Government. He suggested that Germany should sound Vienna and England sound St Petersburg as to whether the four disinterested Powers might undertake to Austria to see that she got full satisfaction from Serbia provided that Serbian independence was not impaired. Russia might be informed by the four Powers that they would undertake to prevent Austrian demands from going the length of impairing Serbian sovereignty. All Powers would of course suspend further military operations or preparations.

He then repeated to Goschen, for transmission to the German Foreign Minister, what he had just said to Prince Lichnowsky. He had told him that "if Germany could get any reasonable proposal put forward which made it clear that Germany and Austria were striving to secure European peace, and that Russia and France would be unreasonable if they rejected it, I would support it at St Petersburg and Paris, and go the length of saying that if Russia and France would not accept it, His Majesty's Government would have nothing more to do with the consequences; but otherwise I told the German Ambassador that if France became involved we should be drawn in."

In that telegram, written in the full stress of a day of strain, we see calmly and unambiguously defined the exact length that Grey was prepared to go in the cause of peace.

Hard upon the despatch of this proposal came a discouraging telegram from Berlin. Goschen reported that Germany had heard that the whole Russian army and fleet were mobilising, and had therefore herself ordered *kriegsgefahr* (*i.e.*, preparedness for war). The German Chancellor thought that this news put an end to all hope of a peaceful solution of the crisis. Asked whether he could not still put pressure on Austria, von Bethmann-Hollweg had replied that he had begged Austria to reply to Sir Edward Grey's last proposal, and had received the answer that the Austrian Foreign Minister would take the wishes of the Emperor that morning in the matter. (Grey's proposal had been made on 29th July.)[21]

Immediately afterwards a telegram from Sir George Buchanan confirmed the news of Russian mobilisation. The reason given was that Austria was determined not to yield to the intervention of the other Powers and was moving troops against Russia as well as against Serbia. Russia, he added, felt that she could not let Germany "get a start" in military preparation. At this point the eagerness of the rival German Staffs to deliver the first blow was an influence which most potently brought war nearer.

But the bad news contained in the last two telegrams did not dash Grey's hopes of peace altogether. He now sends a joint telegram to the British Ambassadors in Paris and Berlin, saying that he still trusts that the situation is not irretrievable. Each receives instructions to enquire of the Government to which he is accredited whether it is prepared to engage to respect Belgium's neutrality so long as no other Power violates it. It is important, he adds, to have an early answer. (An affirmative reply from the French Government was telegraphed by Sir Francis Bertie from Paris that same evening. The German Foreign Minister returned

an evasive reply. He had to consult the Emperor: any reply would disclose the plan of campaign, etc.).

The contents of his last telegram were also conveyed by Grey to the British Minister in Brussels: Grey assumed that the Belgian Government would maintain to the utmost of their power their neutrality, which he desired and expected other Powers to uphold and observe.

Sir Edward Grey then received his visit, in the afternoon, from M. Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador, who evidently tried to obtain from England an explicit assurance of support. Grey thereupon telegraphs to Bertie in Paris: "Nobody here feels that in this dispute, so far as it has yet gone, British treaties or obligations are involved. Feeling is quite different to what it was during the Morocco question. That crisis involved a dispute directly involving France, whereas in this case France is being drawn into a dispute which is not hers. I believe it to be quite untrue that our attitude has been a decisive factor in the situation. German Government do not expect our neutrality. We cannot undertake a definite pledge to intervene in a war. I have so told the French Ambassador who has urged H.M. Government to reconsider this decision."

In stating that the German Government did not expect British neutrality, Sir Edward Grey was proved to be mistaken. If Bethmann-Hollweg had attentively studied Grey's careful phrasing throughout these exciting negotiations, he would have gathered that Germany's attitude must involve England's participation in a consequent war. But there is evidence throughout that no one except Sir Edward Grey kept a perfectly cool head. The cumulative effect of British policy during recent years had been to convey the impression that England would not fight; and this impression seems to have preponderated in Bethmann-Hollweg's mind.

Late in the evening came a despatch from Paris. Sir Francis Bertie said that at 7 P.M. he had been

sent for by the French Foreign Minister, who had informed him that Germany had sent an ultimatum to Russia, demanding demobilisation and an answer within twelve hours. The French Government wanted to know what would be the attitude of England? The German Ambassador had hinted to M. Viviani, the French Prime Minister, that he might require his passports to be returned next day.

Lastly, a telegram from Vienna arrived according to which Austria seemed slightly more conciliatory: Sir Maurice de Bunsen had not, however, been able to get any definite suggestion of compromise.

Late at night Sir Edward Grey sat down and wrote a fuller account to the British Ambassador in Paris of his interview with M. Cambon that afternoon. In the course of the morning M. Cambon had shown Sir Arthur Nicolson, at the Foreign Office, the telegram from M. Jules Cambon, the French Ambassador in Berlin (see p. 206), in which the latter had stated that it was the uncertainty as to Britain's attitude which was "the encouraging element in Berlin." Grey repudiated this suggestion, and informed Sir Francis Bertie that he had told Prince Lichnowsky when he saw him that morning that he declined to say that we should remain neutral, and had "even gone so far as to say that if France and Germany became involved in war, we should be drawn into it": all this Sir Edward Grey told M. Cambon.

He had also informed him that at the Cabinet meeting that morning the Government had come to the conclusion that they could not give any pledge at the present time: though they would have to put their policy before Parliament they could not pledge Parliament in advance: further developments might alter the situation and cause the Government and Parliament to take the view that intervention was justified.

M. Cambon had repeated his question whether we would help France if Germany made an attack on her: Sir Edward Grey said he could only adhere to the

answer that "as far as things had gone at present we could not take any engagement." M. Cambon proceeded to adduce arguments from history why England should intervene, saying that in 1870 we had made a great mistake in allowing an enormous increase of German strength, and we should now be repeating the mistake. Sir Edward Grey gave Sir Francis Bertie to understand that he was not moved by this reasoning to commit himself any further: and when M. Cambon again repeated his request that the Cabinet should reconsider the question of intervention, Sir Edward Grey merely replied that the Cabinet would certainly be summoned as soon as there was a new development, but that at the moment he could give no definite engagement.

During the day, apart from any routine business which may have claimed a few moments' attention, the British Foreign Secretary had received nine despatches, and sent out six, each pregnant in almost every sentence with the possibilities of peace or war. Throughout he remained irremovable from that middle attitude which he, and Britain in him, had adopted. He said no word which he had afterwards to unsay, or which he had cause to regret. His lucidity and precision of expression never left him for a moment, his ideas were never contradictory.

9.

His capacity for coolly considering the situation both as a whole and in its details was hardly shared by some of the other principal actors in it. We have a picture of Prince Lichnowsky given by Mr Walter Page, the American Ambassador—"I went to see the German Ambassador at three o'clock in the afternoon. He came down in his pyjamas, a crazy man. I feared he might literally go mad . . . the poor man had not slept for several nights." And again:—"For several days Lichnowsky's behaviour was that of an irre-

sponsible person. Those who came into contact with him found his mind wandering and incoherent." The state of Count Mensdorff was not much better. Mr Page's interview with him was "little less than a paroxysm of grief on the Austrian's part. He denounced Germany and all its works; he paraded up and down the room wringing his hands." Contrast with this the impression made on the same observer by Grey, whom the American Ambassador was invited to see on the afternoon of Tuesday, 4th August, the day on which the ultimatum to Germany expired, in his room at the Foreign Office. He was standing against the mantelpiece, a tall and worn and rather pallid figure:—"Overwrought he may have been, but there was nothing flurried or excited in his manner; his whole bearing was calm and dignified, his speech was quiet and restrained; he uttered not one bitter word against Germany, but his measured accents had a sureness, a conviction of the justice of his course, that went home in almost deadly fashion. . . . 'The neutrality of Belgium,' he said, and there was a touch of finality in his voice, 'is assured by treaty. It is upon such solemn compacts as this that civilisation rests. . . . Ordered society differs from mere force only by such solemn agreements or compacts. . . . England would be forever contemptible if it should sit by and see this Treaty violated. Its position would be gone if Germany were thus permitted to dominate Europe.'" [22]

Britain may be proud to have possessed, at the most critical juncture in her history, a Foreign Secretary to whom the validity of an old treaty engagement was absolutely sacred. Clearly to Sir Edward Grey the violation by Germany of the Belgian Treaty signed seventy-five years before was a sufficient *casus belli*. His countrymen may congratulate themselves that the keeping of this treaty tallied perfectly with national interests.

# CHAPTER VIII

## ITALY AND THE GREAT WAR

"Dark looms the issue, though the cause be good."
GEO. MEREDITH.

### 1.

WAR brought more, not less, work to the Foreign Office. No member was allowed to volunteer for active service. Former members who had retired to the country rejoined it: large rooms in which two or three clerks had worked in comfort were divided up by screen-partitions and filled with a dozen secretaries and typists. The purely political work increased manifold. Lord Lansdowne once said that if he could divest himself of the whole of his business which was connected either directly or indirectly with the commercial interests of Britain, he would be a comparatively idle man.[1] Now harassing questions of contraband took the place of ordinary commercial matters; and it is to the credit of Sir Edward Grey that he preserved us from acute friction with the numberless neutrals whose ships we dragged into port and searched. No "Armed Neutrality League" was formed against us as when we fought revolutionary France; we did not fall out with America as happened in 1812. Nevertheless, as the principles which were at stake stood out more clearly, and were recognised as being of universal application, as the interests involved produced ever wider ramifications, as the hardships of mere neutrality became more unavoidable and more irksome, it became increasingly evident that many neutral States must ultimately become belligerents. Grey's activities until

1914 had been almost exclusively concerned with inducing other countries to keep the peace; it soon became his uncongenial task to persuade them to join in the fight on the side of the Entente.

Of the European nations which remained outside far the most important was Italy. Though a member of the Triple Alliance, Italy declared for neutrality on 1st August 1914, on the ground that Austria and Germany were not engaged in a defensive war and that therefore the terms of the Treaty did not compel her to join. She had indeed for a long time acted as a moral curb upon the Triple Alliance. She dissociated herself from Germany's blustering attitude at Algeciras in 1906: she refused to join Austria in aggression on Serbia in 1913. And in the case of her own war on the Turks in Tripoli she had met with hostility from her allies. Austria had forbidden her to carry the war into Europe, and had vetoed projected attacks on Albania, in the Gulf of Salonika, and in the Dardanelles. Germany had assisted the Turks with arms and money. In the present war Austria had not consulted her ally beforehand. Italy had been simply neglected by both the Central Powers. It was as if they did not want her help.

During the autumn of 1914, therefore, Italy watched events. An apophthegm which was attributed to the French Ambassador in London gained the vogue which wittiness ensures: "Italie se précipitera au secours du vainqueur" (Italy will rush to the rescue of the winner); but events proved the taunt to be wholly unjust, and Lord Kitchener's prophecy that Italy would be the first neutral to enter the war[2] was apter. Neutrality was quite the natural attitude for Italy to adopt at the outset. The rights and wrongs of the great European quarrel were not immediately so apparent as investigation and reflection afterwards made them. The Roman aristocracy saw in one ally, Germany, a bulwark against the socialism which they detested,[3] and felt themselves bound in honour and even in interest to the ruling classes of the other ally, Austria-Hungary. Extreme clericals looked to Franz Josef as the "Most Catholic

Emperor and Apostolic King," and distrusted France and Russia on religious grounds; and to all Italians France has always been the great Mediterranean rival. Pacifism had conquered many hearts; to the gentle, artistic Italians the horrors of war are more vivid than to most people. The development of North Italy owed much to German capital, to German brains and enterprise. The "Banca Commerciale," nominally an Italian concern, had almost effected Italy's financial subjugation to Germany. It had established branches in most of the big cities, and did not confine its activities to business. It influenced the whole of Lombard and of Roman society by the remunerative posts which it was able to offer. It maintained a "bureau of commercial information" which was in close touch with Germany's secret service. It had obtained great influence over a large section of the Italian Press. It permeated Italian politics with Germanophil ideas.[4]

In the past, too, Germany had rendered real service to Italy. At a critical moment in her unification in 1866, Prussia had been her ally, and by defeating Austria had enabled her to gain Venetia. Four years later Prussia's victory over France had made possible Victor Emmanuel's entry into Rome.

But as much as Prussia had been a friend, Austria had been, and still was, the enemy. For the whole of the past century the minions or the friends of Austria had oppressed every Province in the peninsula from Lombardy to Naples. Four generations of Italian patriots had been incarcerated and hanged by the Austrian police. The wars of liberation had been wars against Austria; and the work of Cavour, Mazzini, and Garibaldi was not yet complete. The purely Italian Trentino north of Garda Lake still belonged to Austria. Trieste, "cittá italianissima," was yet under Austrian rule. Ardent patriots wanted to take up arms against Austria at once; but on the whole Italy was very evenly divided between "Neutralists" and "Interventionists"—the former more numerous at first, the latter increasing steadily in number.

## 2.

Towards the end of 1914, it began to appear that a general rearrangement of European frontiers was a most probable result of the war whichever side won; and in such a rearrangement Italy would be keenly interested. This consideration became the clue of Italy's foreign policy. After the death of the Germanophil San Giuliano, Baron Sonnino became Foreign Minister in November. On the 9th of December he wrote a despatch to the Austrian Government which began the negotiations that ended in Italy's participation in the war. He pointed out that by Article 7 of the Triple Alliance an alteration of the *status quo* in the Balkans could only be made by one party in agreement with the other, and that any advantages, territorial or otherwise, thereby obtained were to be mutual: Austria had as yet come to no agreement with Italy: what, he asked, was the Austrian Government prepared to do in the matter?

The Austrian Government replied that it was not prepared to do anything. Count Berchtold, the Foreign Minister, to whom diplomatic language seems always to have been a means of overcoating fact with fiction, excelled himself by registering in black and white the amazing statement that Austria was fighting to maintain the *status quo* in the Balkans, and that therefore there was no occasion to exchange views with the Italian Government.[5] Baron Sonnino was of mixed Scottish and Jewish ancestry, and bargaining opponents found him a hard and obstinate man. The German Foreign Office at once perceived Berchtold's mistake in treating him with this mixture of haughtiness and levity, and despatched as special envoy to Rome Prince Bülow, with instructions to promote friendly negotiations between Rome and Vienna.

The Prince had been German Imperial Chancellor for many years, and was a brilliant exponent of

twentieth-century Continental diplomacy. He was a clever talker, an admirable linguist, an attractive man of the world. He could make himself agreeable at will to professors and to princes, to journalists and cabinet ministers, in the drawing-room and at the Council. His prevailing principle was to use others to his purpose. He was an expert at manipulating parliamentary groups and influencing newspapers; he astutely overcame minor difficulties, and always, if he could, averted fundamental issues. He had married an Italian lady. With her he now installed himself in a beautiful house on the Pincian Hill, on the outskirts of Rome, known as the Villa Malta. He set himself to mobilise all the Austro-German forces in Italy, to smooth the path of negotiation between Italy and Austria, and to combat with all the resources of his own peculiar diplomacy the clear-sighted, resolute purpose of Baron Sonnino.

This capable Minister was determined that Italy should gain her legitimate national frontiers, and should gain them as soon as possible. When, at the instigation of Bülow, the Austrian Foreign Office began to admit the possibility of ultimate concessions of territory in return for Italian neutrality throughout the war, Sonnino replied that a promissory note was not sufficient; he demanded immediate transfer. Berchtold had in the meantime been succeeded in Vienna by Count Burian, who in a despatch of 28th January suggested that Italian aspirations might be gratified elsewhere. He mentioned that when the Western Allies were beaten Corsica might be available, or even Egypt.[6] Sonnino replied that he could not regard their presumptive defeat as a negotiable factor, and that unless territory were ceded at once the Triple Alliance, to which Italy still belonged, would be denounced. On 8th April he specified his demands, and claimed as a new frontier in the Trentino that which Napoleon had given to his "Kingdom of Italy" in 1811. Trieste was to be constituted an autonomous and independent State. Italy was also

to receive the southern Dalmatian Islands, Lissa, Lesina, and others. Austria would recognise Italian sovereignty over Valona, and "cease to interest herself in Albania."[7]

Burian did not believe that Italy would fight, and summarily rejected the proposals (16th April 1915).

### 3.

While the Austrian Government was stubbornly and short-sightedly bidding defiance to Italy, Germany showed a better appreciation of her value. The Kaiser intervened personally. He had already sent to Rome a second envoy in support of Prince Bülow. The new emissary was Herr Erzberger, leader of the German Roman Catholics, and therefore considered a suitable agent to go between the Austrian Government, the Papacy, the Italian Government, and Germany. He displayed an energy which surpassed even that of Bülow. In order to bind the Papacy yet more firmly to the Central Powers he drew up a scheme whereby, in the event of their victory, Temporal Power should be restored to it. He even presented His Holiness with a map, on which was marked the extent of the future State of the Church.[8] He apparently succeeded in his immediate object, for in the subsequent activities of the Holy See during the war sympathy for the cause of the Central Powers was clearly discernible. Erzberger realised at once the futility of the *non-possumus* attitude of Baron Burian and his Ambassador in Rome, Baron Machio. On Burian's rejection of Sonnino's terms on 16th April he therefore hurried to Vienna, and succeeded in shaking the obstinacy of the Austrian Government. But when he returned to Rome on 1st May he sensed that the situation had hardened against him. Both the Prime Minister, Signor Salandra, and the Foreign Minister were scarcely open to discussion. Something had happened in his absence. He learned that Signor Tittoni, Italy's Ambassador in Paris, had been seen

in Rome. He presumed that it was in connection with negotiations with France and Britain—and he was right; for on 26th April Sir Edward Grey for Britain, M. Cambon for France, and Count Benckendorff for Russia had signed with the Italian Ambassador in London a secret Pact, whereby Italy undertook to intervene in the war, within one month, against the Central Powers. This was naturally unknown to Erzberger; but a few days later he learned that on 3rd May Baron Sonnino, in a final despatch to Vienna, had denounced the Triple Alliance, and from that moment "resumed her full liberty of action."

4.

The dauntless man did not despair. His one chance was to bring about a change of Government which should bring the party of non-intervention into power. The chance was not a hopeless one, for the Neutralists were led by a veteran politician of singular and unscrupulous ability. Signor Giolitti had only recently retired from the premiership, and most of the actual Chamber owned him as leader. He was the dominating political figure of Italy. He was an adept at what the Americans call "machine" politics,[9] and could pull important strings even when he was out of office. His methods were those of the bosses of Tammany Hall. He was known as the "bad sausage" of Italian politics by his opponents; but "Giolittism" had become a compact and powerful element. It prevailed at the ballot-boxes and in Parliament. There was no interest which could stand against Giolitti's trained battalion. To shifting groups he opposed a disciplined body of parliamentary legionaries. No Ministry was deemed safe without his support. Salandra, the Prime Minister, was his nominee. The majority on which he relied still took its cue from its septuagenarian dictator.[9] This dexterous tactician was believed by Erzberger and Prince Bülow to hold Parliament in the hollow of

his hand. He was known to be friendly to the German connection. They therefore invited him to come to Rome in order that they might acquaint him with certain proposals. Giolitti left his northern country home for Rome; and on 10th May he learned to his astonishment from Herr Erzberger that, without striking a blow, Italy would be in a position to obtain an almost complete fulfilment of her national ambitions.

The German envoys, Bülow and Erzberger, had at last persuaded Austria to make serious concessions. Italy was to receive all the Italian Tyrol and the Isonzo district: Trieste was to have the status of a free town, and to possess an Italian university: Austria agreed to the occupation by Italy of Valona, the southern port of Albania, which with Brindisi commands the entrance to the Adriatic: Italy was to have a free hand in Albania; Germany, moreover, undertook to guarantee the execution of the Agreement. The terms now offered, in fact, yielded all the principal demands of Baron Sonnino in his despatch of 8th April, excepting the cession of some southern Dalmatian Islands.

Giolitti on the same morning, 10th May, showed these proposals to a number of deputies. They were as delighted as they were amazed to hear that without the effort of a war Italy might gain, almost completely, her ethnographical frontiers. With the exception of Trieste and a few smaller towns on the Dalmatian coast, all Italian-speaking territory was to be united under the Italian flag. Giolitti, greatly elated, asked Prince Bülow for the official communication of these terms signed by himself, Herr Erzberger, and the Austrian Ambassador. He also demanded their confirmation by the Viennese Foreign Office.

By 10.45 that evening three copies of the document had been drawn up in French. Bülow, Erzberger, and Machio met at the Villa Malta to sign them. The Austrian was even then refractory; but the two Germans overcame his objections; and by 11.20 P.M.

one of the copies was handed to Giolitti's representative, who was waiting for it, the other two being retained by Bülow and Erzberger.[10] Machio, the tiresome business over, left the Villa to divert his mind from political worry, leaving it to Erzberger to make copies for the Austrian Embassy and for the Holy See. No sooner was he gone, however, than Giolitti's messenger returned, begging that signed copies might also be ready for the Prime Minister and Baron Sonnino in the morning. It was only the work of a short hour for Erzberger to finish his two extra copies, to obtain Prince Bülow's signature, and to append his own. But to get Machio's was another matter. The recreant Ambassador was not to be found at his private residence, at his Embassy, or at his Club. In vain the indefatigable Erzberger sought him through half the night in the big hotels and the most frequented cafés. Baffled and tired he finally repaired to the Palazzo Chigi, Machio's home in the Corso, and sat heavy-eyed through the early hours of the morning awaiting the reveller's return. He eventually obtained his signatures; and by 11 A.M. on the 11th signed copies were in the hands of the head of the Italian Government and his Foreign Minister. Next day official confirmation of the offer was received from the Austrian Government.

The official presentation of these favourable terms at once produced a political crisis. Bülow and Erzberger lavished their utmost efforts to drive the advantage home. The German Kaiser's personal guarantee for their fulfilment was obtained. The Austrian Emperor would announce them by proclamation for all the world to record. Austrian combatants of Italian nationality would be liberated. Italian civil administration might be installed in the ceded territories at once.

The Villa Malta became the scene of feverish activity. Two days before (9th May) the Italian Government had ordered the expulsion of Erzberger; but that resourceful diplomatist had immediately

obtained by telegram his appointment as attaché to the German Embassy, thereby rendering his person inviolable. He now installed himself at Prince Bülow's residence. Its apartments during those critical days were filled with motley visitors. Pro-German mayors, political priests, agents from Albania, magnates of the Banca Commerciale discussed stipends, promises, and propaganda. Newspaper editors received confidential or exclusive information in return for a series of attacks on Entente diplomacy. Fictitious German victories were officially announced. The forged documents and shady emissaries of Count Bernstorff in America, the spies and bravoes of Baron Schenk in Athens[11] had their counterparts in melodrama swarming the anterooms of the Villa Malta, and speeding thence like bees upon the errands of Erzberger and Bülow. Giolittian deputies flocked thither, making bargains for posts in the new Ministry which they confidently expected. No less than 320 members out of a Chamber of 508, left cards on their chief as a token of their fidelity to him. Three days of feverish lobbying, wire-pulling, and secret conclaves turned the parliamentary scale in favour of accepting the Central Powers' offer. On 13th May Salandra's Cabinet resigned. The King sent for Giolitti.

## 5.

Political wire-pullers are apt to forget the people; and the Italian public had been steadily drawing further away from the Central Powers. The publication of documents and the investigation of facts revealed Germany's deliberate planning and Britain's unpreparedness for war. Britain had never been an enemy, and often a friend to Italy. Now, to friendship for England and hatred for Austria, was added disgust at German methods. Englishmen had been willing to fight this, as other wars, in a chivalrous spirit; the Germans preferred barbarity. The Bryce Committee's report, based on strictly authenticated cases, was

published just at this moment (12th May). It found that "murder, lust, and pillage prevailed on a scale unparalleled in any war between civilised nations during the last three centuries." The cruelties inflicted upon Belgian peasants, the wanton destruction of Louvain Library, the abuse of the white flag, and the use of poison gas shocked the conscience of Italy. The Belgian poet Maeterlinck visited the peninsula and recounted with effect the wrongs of his countrymen. On 8th May came the news of the ruthless sinking of the *Lusitania*, a crime which was vividly realised by Italians who yearly cross the Atlantic in thousands on their way to and from America. Some of the most distinguished publicists of Milan and Rome felt, moreover, that the moment had come for Italy to assert herself as an independent Great Power. Though one of the European Concert she had been treated rather as a subordinate by her allies, and by Englishmen, Americans, and Frenchmen she was habitually regarded as the home of antiquities, of artists and of poets, rather than a vigorous modern State. Above all, the whole nation was becoming stirred at the prospect of striking one final blow at Austrian tyranny and crowning the work of Victor Emmanuel and his gallant followers by the liberation on the field of battle of unredeemed Italians beyond the northern borders. In Baron Sonnino they began to believe they had found a second Cavour. A second Mazzini did not fail Italy in her need.

The poet d'Annunzio arrived in Rome on 12th May —on the eve, that is to say, of Salandra's resignation. At Genoa, on 4th and 5th May, he had already, in two fervid orations, sounded a clarion note calling Italy to arms. His patriotism was expressed in emotional terms which went straight to the hearts of his mercurial listeners. "Blessed are those who will return with victory," he cried, "for they shall behold the vision of a new Rome, the brow of Dante crowned afresh, the ineffable beauty of triumphant Italy." His cry raised an echo, louder than even he

expected, from the Alps to Sicily. He proceeded to Rome; and there, in one public place and another, with glowing patriotism and fierce invective against the pro-German party, he denounced the policy of the Central Powers in the past and in the present, and called upon Italy to remember her former glories and add a new chapter to Italian history more glorious than all before. He was entrusted by the Government with the information of the promises obtained from the Entente in return for participation in the war. The Pact was secret; but d'Annunzio was allowed to hint at the large amount of territory which was to become Italy's and which was to render the Adriatic an Italian lake. Night after night, while Bülow and Erzberger schemed behind guarded doors, the poet addressed mass meetings in the open places of Rome. During the critical eight days between 12th and 20th May, when Parliament was to reassemble after the Easter recess, enthusiasm grew, and the warm summer nights rang with the applause of his adherents. Maddened audiences rocked with the throb of his impassioned phrases, and at the close of meetings scattered into side-streets in groups which shouted "A morte Giolitti." "Evviva Salandra." "Evviva la guerra." ("Death to Giolitti. Long live Salandra. Long live war.") The Freemason societies backed the poet's words with demonstrations and street-rioting.

Giolittians began to feel scared. Several were roughly handled in the streets and cafés. Erzberger's motor-car was twice stoned. The post brought daily packets of letters from constituents urging their deputies to vote for war. Parliament was to reassemble on the 20th; and many neutralist members took the precaution of going to the Montecitorio on the evening of the 19th, and spending the night in the Chamber, for fear of being mobbed. At the formal opening next day its approaches were lined with troops. But the patriotic emotion of the populace had penetrated the portals and electrified the atmosphere before the great debate began. Salandra, who had been recalled

by the King, received an ovation. Sonnino was enthusiastically acclaimed. Giolitti was not there. Deserted by their leader his men rallied to Salandra. A motion intimating active intervention was carried by 407 votes against 74. Three days after (23rd May) war was declared upon Austria. Declarations against Turkey and Germany followed later.

6.

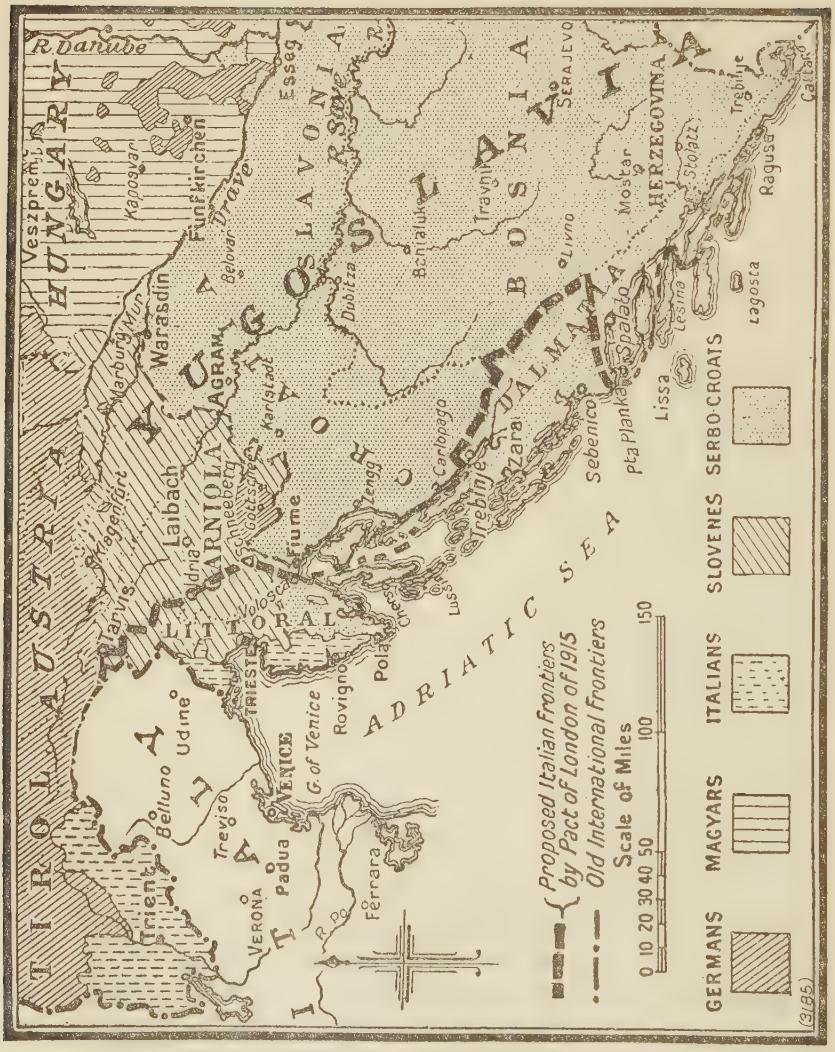
The British Embassy in Rome kept aloof from the remotest appearance of intrusion in Italian domestic affairs. Sir Rennell Rodd assured the Quirinal of Britain's continued friendship towards a neutral Italy; and no doubt gave expression to the pleasure which the Western Powers would feel were they to gain so valuable an ally. But the serious diplomatic business was transacted in London by Sir Edward Grey himself, in conjunction with M. Paul Cambon and Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador, and Marquis Imperiali, acting as spokesman of the Italian Foreign Office.

Early in March 1915, the latter formally approached Sir Edward Grey with the proposal that Italy should participate in the war on the side of the Western Allies in return for territorial aggrandisement. Till that moment, resisting pressure from certain quarters, Sir Edward Grey had refrained from trying to influence Italy. He had preferred to leave it to her to make up her mind. When in December 1914 M. Sazonoff, the Russian Foreign Minister, proposed that Serbian claims should be met by the partition of Albania between Serbia and Greece, the British Secretary had replied that on such a point Italy must be consulted. This courteous suggestion was timely. It was remembered by Italy when next month (January 1915) Prince Bülow in Rome urged the Italian Government to proceed to the pacification of Albania, where Austrian and German agents were being employed to create chaos among the primitive Albanian tribes-

men. This helpless country has always been a temptation to the predatory instincts of its neighbours; and the quick and cynical eye of Bülow marked it as a most suitable quarrelling ground between Italy and the future State of Southern Slavs. He whispered into the ears of the Quirinal the prospective danger to Italy of a large Yugo-Slav State. It was his best weapon for keeping Italy from joining the Allies; and he used it well.

In the autumn of 1914 the Italian Foreign Office had sounded both Paris and London as to the possibility of obtaining Tunis; and had actually put out feelers as to a possible rectification of the Nice frontier between Italy and France. These suggestions were indignantly repudiated by M. Delcassé, who was once more French Foreign Minister. They were therefore not included in the official proposals made by Marchese Imperiali in March. Italy claimed the Trentino, Trieste, Fiume, Istria, Dalmatia, and Valona, together with twelve islands in the Ægean, and certain prospective rights in Africa and Asia Minor. During the negotiations which followed Sir Edward Grey, supported by M. Sazonoff, obtained modification of Italy's demands in two important particulars. Fiume was to be reserved as the principal port of the future Yugo-Slav State; and the Dalmatian coast from Cape Planka southward to the Narenta river, originally claimed by Italy, was also to be allotted to the Yugo-Slavs.

Thus modified the Pact of London, to which reference has already been made, was secretly signed on 26th April 1915. Thereby, in return for military co-operation, Italy was to receive the Trentino and southern Tyrol "up to its natural geographical frontier, which is the Brenner Pass"; the whole of the Isonzo district; the whole of Istria with Trieste; the northern part of the Dalmatian coast; almost all the islands from outside Fiume in the north to the southernmost islet off the coast of Herzegovina; Valona, in the south of Albania, and the adjoining islet of Sasseno;




TREATY OF LONDON, 1915.

and the twelve Ægean islands known as the Dodecanese. She was to have the right of conducting the foreign relations of Albania. In case France, Great Britain, and Russia should, in the course of the war, occupy any districts of Asiatic Turkey, "the entire territory adjacent to Adalia was to be left" to Italy. Similarly, should the other signatory Powers increase their holdings in Africa, Italy gained the right to demand as compensation an extension of her possessions "in Eritrea, Somaliland, Libya, and the Colonial areas adjoining French and British Colonies." By Article 15 France, Britain, and Russia pledged themselves to support Italy in preventing the Holy See from participating in the peace negotiations. Finally, by Article 16, the Treaty was to be kept secret.

No act of Sir Edward Grey's has been more sharply criticised than the conclusion of this Treaty. The criticisms have been mainly formulated under three heads—that it was unnecessary, since Italy would have joined the Allies in any case; that it was secret; and that it violated the principle of nationality.

It is not easy to see how the first contention can be substantiated. Baron Sonnino was clearly determined to obtain a rectification of Italy's frontiers; and in the light of Herr Erzberger's revelations it is clear that Austria, under German pressure, would have made very considerable concessions of territory as soon as Italy displayed a real readiness to fight. Mobilisation would probably have been sufficient for Italy to achieve her minimum object if Sir Edward Grey had not offered considerably more profitable terms in return for active collaboration. Italy's extremely vulnerable coast-line and her dependence upon imported coal would have sufficed, perhaps, to prevent her from taking side against the Powers which controlled the Mediterranean. But she might have won her national frontiers by an armed, though reluctant and unpopular, neutrality.

In regard to the secrecy of the Pact, it is sufficient to observe that nobody was more averse than Sir Edward Grey, not excepting President Wilson himself,

from the conclusion of secret treaties. He made none in peace time. But public diplomacy, difficult in peace, is impossible in war. And in this case there was a very special reason for secrecy—namely, that its divulgation would have greatly disheartened the southern Slav enemies of Austria, and might indeed have convulsed against Italy a race whose sympathies it was policy of the Allies to foster. This leads to the discussion of the third and most cogent criticism of the Treaty—that it violated the principle of nationality, by making over to Italy Dalmatian territory where the vast bulk of the population was Slavonic, and only 3 per cent. Italian.

The Bosnian crisis of 1908 must have revealed to Sir Edward Grey the reality and the intensity of Southern Slav nationalism. Yet the Slavonic population of the "Littoral," and the northern half of Dalmatia, where Zara alone is preponderantly Italian, were allocated to Italy. Marquis Imperiali, indeed, put forward no ethnical claim to the eastern Adriatic coast; he based his argument on considerations of strategy: since the harbours of the Adriatic were almost all on its eastern side, for Dalmatia to be in the hands of an enemy was to expose Italy to a perpetual risk of invasion. On similar grounds the Marquis claimed and obtained the Brenner frontier in the Alps, which is considerably north of the ethnographic dividing-line, and places under Italian rule some 250,000 Tyrolese. These mountaineers have in the past shown a special detestation of foreign yoke; and when the Germanic peoples have recovered their proper position in Europe, Italy will probably have reason to regret her acquisition of this sturdy, independent, and incongruous community. The obtainment of the twelve Ægean Islands cannot be justified either by strategic or ethnical arguments. The Dodecanese are inhabited almost exclusively by Greeks; and Italy had actually undertaken to cede them to Greece in 1914. She has, since the close of the War, announced her intention of abandoning eleven of the twelve islands to their natural owners (Treaty of Sèvres, 10th August 1920). Rhodes, the largest and

the only fertile one, has been retained, with the curious proviso that it will be handed over to Greece when Britain yields Cyprus to that country.

Italy has also since admitted the futility of her claim to the Eastern Adriatic by voluntarily renouncing to Yugo-Slavia, by the Treaty of Rapallo (12th November 1920), the whole of that region, with the exception of the town of Zara and the islands of Cherso, Lussin, Lagosta, and Pelagosa. Sir Edward Grey,

YUGO-SLAVIA (TREATY OF RAPALLO).

therefore, conceded to Italy a great deal more territory, on the Eastern Adriatic coast and in the Ægean Sea, than Italy herself has found it wise or necessary to retain. In spite of its secrecy, moreover, the gist of the London Treaty became known in the course of the war both to the Serb and the Greek Governments, and made them less willing to co-operate with Italy than they would otherwise have been. It had the further disadvantage of setting the Slav elements in the Austro-Hungarian army fiercely against Italy; and their disaffection would on the contrary have been whetted if

a definite statement in favour of the constitution of a Yugo-Slav State had been published early in the war. When a campaign of propaganda across the enemy's lines was commenced in 1918 under the direction of Lord Northcliffe it became necessary to make promises to the Yugo-Slavs which were incompatible with the Pact of London. At the date when the Pact was signed (26th April) Austria had as yet made no concessions whatever to Italy; and Sir Edward Grey's tender to Italy may now, therefore, be judged to have been excessive. But war-conditions made sure information as to what was happening difficult to get. At the end of March it had been reported from Berne that Italy had come to an agreement with Germany and Austria.

Since Russia, moreover, was associated with her in the negotiations, it would have been unnatural for Britain to declare herself a more uncompromising advocate of the Slav cause than her Slavonic ally. M. Sazonoff consented to sign the Treaty when the embryonic Southern Slav State had been allotted her natural commercial outlet at Fiume, together with the Croatian sea-board and the coast from Cape Planka southward; it was surely not for Sir Edward Grey to endanger the adhesion of Italy by further protracting the negotiations. From the point of view of British interests the principal object was to secure the assistance of the Italian army, and augment the forces arrayed against the Central Powers by 750,000 men. In May 1915 we were locked in deadly struggle with an opponent whose tremendous strength we were only then beginning to appreciate. Those fighting on the Western Front yearned for reinforcements from whatsoever quarter. Stalemate had been reached. The naval attack on the Dardanelles had failed. On the Eastern Front Russia had won a few preliminary successes in the early spring campaign; but on 28th April, two days after the signature of the London Treaty, began that tremendous drive by von Mackensen which flung the Russian armies backward

through Galicia; and it was at the height of this Russian retreat, when the Germans reached the San River in mid-May, that Italy finally took her resolve to stand by the Treaty concluded for her by Sonnino and to throw in her lot with the Western Powers.

## 7.

Nor was the Italian army the only accession of strength which the London Treaty secured to Britain. The Roumanian Minister in London, M. Mishu, informed the British Government in the early autumn of 1914 that Roumania's policy would be that of Italy; and Sir Edward Grey must have therefore kept in mind that Italy's participation would eventually bring a reinforcement of 500,000 Roumanians, and thus increase the Allies' strength altogether by 1,250,000 fresh troops at the accepted pre-war estimate of the Italian and Roumanian enemies, which, in the event, was very considerably exceeded.

The Roumanian declaration of war on Austria-Hungary was in fact made on the same day on which Italy declared war on Germany, namely 27th August 1916. Roumania, like Italy, had been tied to the Central Powers. Her Hohenzollern King had made a secret compact with his kinsman, the Emperor Franz Josef, as far back as 1883. The Roumanian Government, however, to the great chagrin of King Carol, refused in August 1914 to take part in the war on the side of the Central Powers, and declared for neutrality. The sympathies of the country were with France, of which Roumania, proud of her Latin origin, loves to consider herself the counterpart in Eastern Europe. There were "unredeemed" Roumanians over the frontier, in Transylvania, under Austro-Hungarian rule. As in the case of Italy, Austria undid herself by refusing all timely concessions; and an internal struggle similar to that of Rome raged in Bucharest. As in Rome, British diplomacy played the part of benevolent spectator. In January 1915 we advanced Roumania

the sum of £5,000,000. But the local negotiations on behalf of the Entente Powers were in the very capable hands of the French Minister, the Comte de Saint-Aulaire, now Ambassador in London. M. Sazonoff retained general direction from Petrograd; and M. de Saint-Aulaire acted, no doubt, in close conjunction with his Russian colleague. That diplomatist, however, had unfortunately prematurely promised the whole of Transylvania to Roumania in return for her neutrality alone. Before her active co-operation could be secured, therefore, her associates-to-be found themselves compelled to make a further promise of Bukovina and the whole Banat of Temesvar. Both these provinces were inhabited by Rumanes. But possession of the latter brought Roumanian territory to the gates of Belgrade,* and was the cause after the war of friction with Yugo-Slavia, in the same way as by the London Treaty the possession of Dalmatia became a cause of friction between Yugo-Slavia and Italy.

Whatever difficulties subsequently arose from the bargains with Italy and Roumania, it cannot be forgotten that these bargains were made under the duress of war, that the winning of the war was necessary to rescue Europe from a despotic domination, and that the Treaties so concluded were held by experts at the time to contribute substantially to the winning of that war. There were military advisers in 1915 who gave Sir Edward Grey the opinion that Italy's entry on the side of the Allies would end the war within three months. M. Delcassé opined that it would bring victory within a year.[12] A century before European liberties had also been exposed to the domination of a single Power. Lord Castlereagh had not then hesitated to promise to Austria the restoration of Venice in return for her rally to the nations which were fighting to overthrow Napoleon.[13] To instal Austria once more in Italy was a cause not only of subsequent friction, but of more than one war. Yet if Metternich had been allowed to adhere to

* See map, p. 235.

Napoleon in 1813 instead of joining the Allies, who can say for how long Napoleon's power would have been established against us? A worse tyranny threatened the liberties of Europe in 1914; and Italy was actually an ally of the Powers which threatened them. Her governmental reluctance to sever the connection with the German Empire, with whom she had no quarrel, was seen by her extremely tardy declaration of war against it. If Austria had made her offer of 10th May earlier, as Sir Edward Grey could not tell for certain she had not, Italy might have become tied to neutrality, and Sir Edward Grey would have been too late. As it was, Austria "arrived a quarter of an hour too late" for the last, decisive time in her imperial history.

# CHAPTER IX

## BULGARIA AND THE GREAT WAR

"Therefore it is the weaker sort of politicians that are the great dissemblers."
F. BACON.

### 1.

SIR EDWARD GREY was rigid in his diplomacy. He did not adapt his methods to his fellow-negotiators. He was the same straight, honourable, conventional dealer with Turks, Bulgarians, and Prussians as with Frenchmen, Italians, and Americans. He was successful with the latter but not with the former. In the labyrinth of Balkan politics few English statesmen have clearly seen their way; and Sir Edward Grey's year's exertion to bring Bulgaria into the Great War on our side was wholly ineffectual.

At first, indeed, he seems to have hoped that excepting Serbia and Montenegro, who were already involved, the Balkan nations might be kept out of the business; but later, as the tide of battle rolled eastward, when Turkey joined our enemies and the Ægean ports became important outposts, as Serbia's existence became imperilled and Roumania grew restless, it became an obvious probability that in the great clash of armies and of principles every State, at any rate, which nourished unfulfilled ambitions, would surely have to choose a side.

Bulgaria was burning to redeem the situation in which the Treaty of Bucharest (10th August 1913) had left her. That Treaty was the first in modern history in which the Balkan States had been allowed by the Great Powers to conclude their own settlement.

It had therefore been determined on the ancient (and mediæval) principle of *væ victis*. Serbia, Greece, Roumania, and Turkey, uniting against the unpopular Bulgars, had deprived them of most of the territory which they had gained by the Treaty of London (30th May 1913), which closed the war waged by the united Balkan States against Turkey. Bulgaria had lost the greater part of Macedonia to Serbia; Western Thrace to Greece; Southern Dobruja to Roumania, and the Adrianople district to Turkey. All these she had ever since hoped to regain; and the war was her opportunity.

It was soon realised, moreover, that Bulgaria's geographical position gave her peculiar importance. To the Central Powers she was the corridor between Middle Europe and the East. The main line from Vienna to Constantinople passes from Belgrade through Sofia and Philipopolis, the Capital of Southern Bulgaria. With Bulgaria's compliance Germany would be able to command the route from Hamburg to Bagdad. After a very few months' fighting Turkey became short of ammunition, and informed Germany (in the late summer of 1915) that she would be unable to continue much longer unless her supplies were replenished. Germany, on her part, soon turned eager eyes to the granaries of Asia Minor.

To the Western Allies a passage through Bulgaria would be hardly less valuable. Russia, like Turkey, was unable to use her full man-power for want of equipment and ammunition: Russia, like Turkey, was capable of producing surplus wheat. If Russia could debouch through Bulgaria or the Straits, she could pour hundreds of thousands of men, swiftly conveyed on allied transports, to the hard-pressed armies in France and Flanders, and thus obviate the voyages of almost prohibitive length from Archangel or Siberia. The most obvious way to open up the route to Southern Russia was, of course, by the Straits of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus. This route the Entente Powers were soon attempting ineffectually to force; and the failure

might easily be converted into success if Bulgaria might be induced to make a land attack upon Constantinople. To win Bulgaria, therefore, would be for either side not only to secure a positive gain, but to create for the other side a permanent obstacle to intercourse with an ally.

2.

The above considerations seem to have occurred first to the keen, wide-ranging mind of Mr Winston Churchill. He vigorously advocated the need of commanding the Straits; and he at once set about attempting to secure the help of Bulgaria. He bethought him of Mr Noel Buxton, a well-known Member of Parliament who was an expert on Balkan affairs, and was in particular a friend of Bulgaria. Mr Buxton was in Scotland at the time; so he wrote him a letter, dated 31st August 1914, begging him to go out to South-Eastern Europe and see what he could do in the way of bringing the different States together on the side of the Entente. He referred in somewhat fustian language to the possibility of creating a Balkan Confederation. "It is of the utmost importance to the future prosperity of the Balkan States," he wrote, "that they should act together. This is the hour when the metal can be cast into the mould. . . . By disunion they will simply condemn themselves to tear each others' throats without profit or reward, and left to themselves they will play an utterly futile part in the destinies of the world . . . the creation of a Balkan Confederation comprising Bulgaria, Serbia, Roumania, Montenegro, and Greece, strong enough to play an effective part in the destinies of Europe, must be the common dream of all their peoples." Mr Buxton must have known his Balkans well enough to realise that no such common dream animated, ever did animate,[1] or was the least likely to animate, the petty and pugnacious minds of the primitive Balkan peoples; but he liked the prospect of the proposed mission, and left for the East at once. H.M.S. *Hussar*

was waiting for him at Brindisi, and he reached Sofia quickly.

After careful investigations there and in other Balkan capitals, Mr Buxton wrote an excellent exposition of the situation to Sir Edward Grey. He said that the state of Macedonia provided a constant temptation to Bulgaria to respond to the urgent pressure of Austria and attack Serbia, though the pressure had been temporarily removed (January 1915) by the successes of the Serbs, who had thrice beaten back Austrian invasions. He stated clearly Bulgarian aims, which amounted in effect to the recovery of the territories already enumerated; and laid down the following very wise conditions of success:—

1. The arrangements suggested must be precise and not vague.
2. They must be dictated by the Entente.

None of the peoples concerned would allow their governments to cede territory voluntarily; but to accept the terms of the Entente would be a different matter. It was true that the Bulgarian Government was Austrophil, as was also King Ferdinand. But its position was unstable: it depended on a majority of only fifteen,[2] and its supersession by an opposition or coalition government without a general election was an admitted possibility. Mr Buxton wasted little time in talking of a union of hearts; in fact we find no single mention of a Balkan Confederation in his memoranda. It will be seen that when at last, in May 1915, Britain, France, Russia and Italy combined to make formal joint proposals to Bulgaria they were on the lines suggested by Mr Buxton; but they did not fulfil his two postulates—they were vague, and they were not imposed by force.

His mission ended in failure, to which several causes contributed. In the first place Mr Buxton's position was ambiguous. Was he or was he not authorised to arrange terms with Bulgaria? Britain already had her diplomatic representative in Sofia, Sir Henry Bax-

Ironside. Sir Henry naturally regarded Mr Buxton as something of an intruder; and the two men were unlikely to collaborate cordially in that Mr Buxton was a well-known pro-Bulgar, and the British Minister was regarded as pro-Serb, a charge which Mr Buxton did not hesitate to make against him in an official communication to Sir Edward Grey. It was a capital blunder to send out an amateur diplomatist, however well-informed, without properly defining his authority; and in the end Mr Buxton, through no fault of his own, did more harm than good. His activities were carefully watched by all the enemies of the Entente Powers; and Enver Pasha did him the compliment of suborning an agent to make away with him. This ruffian, who was on terms of the greatest intimacy with Fetih Bey, the Turkish Minister in Sofia, followed Mr Buxton to Bucharest, and there, on 15th October, managed to shoot at him. The bullet struck its victim in the jaw, and sent him to hospital. There, scanning on his sick-bed an English journal, he discovered to his annoyance that long accounts of his activities had found their way into most of the European Press. He also later read that a question had been asked in the House of Commons, and that Sir Edward Grey had denied by implication official cognisance of his mission. This ungrateful repudiation had a disastrous effect in Bulgaria. There Mr Buxton was very popular, and a good deal of faith had been reposed in his assurances of friendship and his efforts to obtain for Bulgarians satisfaction of their claims. The disavowal of their friend shook their belief in Britain's good intentions.

While Mr Churchill was sustaining Mr Buxton and Sir Edward Grey disavowing him, a third member of the Cabinet was, in March and April 1915, meeting the Bulgarian Minister in London, M. Hadji Micheff, at dinners arranged by a mutual friend. As a result of these unofficial conversations the Bulgarian representative was invited to telegraph to his Government an attractive proposal, which was believed to be adequate for obtaining Bulgaria's adhesion. When the Sofia

Government replied making a request for a definite statement of the Entente's intentions, the proposal was not adhered to; and after a long delay a cold answer was returned.[3] This experience further discouraged and discredited the pro-Entente parties in Sofia.

Mr Lloyd George, whose inspirations were so frequent and so happy during the war, throughout supported every measure which might secure Bulgaria for the Entente; and in March 1915 he recommended the summoning of a Conference on an island in the Ægean for the formulation of a strong, definite Balkan policy by all the Powers concerned. Lemnos was suggested, and it was hoped that the Foreign Ministers of the neutral Balkan States as well as of Serbia would be able to attend.[4] For reasons which are not stated this excellent suggestion could not be carried out.

## 3.

Meanwhile other visitors were courting Sofia. At the end of December 1914, the veteran Marshal von der Goltz, who personified German military pre-eminence to South-Eastern Europe, paid a demonstrative visit to King Ferdinand, bringing with him an autograph letter from Kaiser Wilhelm. The Bulgarian monarch was urged to join the Central Powers at once. Greece, he was told, would be made to cede "her recent acquisitions:" Bulgarian forces would be used to fight Serbs and the French, but not Russians. The Marshal was very favourably received by King Ferdinand; and his visit was followed by an advance by German banks, in January 1915, of £3,000,000. This was a belated fulfilment of an agreement for a loan of £20,000,000 concluded in July 1914. The payment of the instalment at this particular moment probably indicates that von der Goltz obtained what he considered satisfactory assurances from Ferdinand. On the other hand there is reason to believe that Germany retained the right to rescind the loan at any time; and a special stipulation provided that the greater

part should be paid in supplies—whether military or commercial is not known—and only a small percentage in cash.[5]

Determined not to be behindhand in making a parade in Sofia, the British Government despatched thither a distinguished general, Sir Arthur Paget, who arrived in February 1915, two months after von der Goltz had left. General Paget had met King Ferdinand before, and counted on being cordially received. Only with some difficulty, however, could the British Minister arrange an audience for him. The hour was settled for 3 P.M. And a couple of hours before that time a message from the Palace arrived for the general to the effect that the King was very busy, and would not be able to receive him till later. Finally, *after dark*, Sir Arthur was invited to proceed to the Palace; where Ferdinand greeted him with every sign of cordiality. He assured him that Bulgaria would never fight against England, and that within a very short time she would almost certainly throw in her lot with the Entente Powers. The first sign, His Majesty continued, would be the dismissal of one of the most Austrophil of his Ministers, which would be followed by the fall of the whole Radoslavoff Cabinet. Ferdinand, so far as it is possible to judge, was even more affable with his visitor than he had been with von der Goltz. Certain it is that Sir Arthur Paget returned to his quarters in an extremely optimistic mood; and next morning composed and sent off to Lord Kitchener a despatch in which he stated his conviction that Bulgaria would shortly be numbered among the allies of Britain.

These conclusions were traversed in a despatch written on the same day to the Foreign Office by Sir Henry Bax-Ironside. The British Minister deliberately dissociated himself to Sir Edward Grey from the views of his military colleague. He stated that he did not believe in any of the promises made to General Paget either by the King or the Prime Minister.

4

Sir Henry Bax-Ironside had served in many lands, knew South-Eastern Europe very well, and had been in Bulgaria since 1911—therefore through the crisis of the years 1912 and 1913. He had discovered and reported to the Foreign Office some weeks before the news arrived from any other source the secret Treaty between Bulgaria and Serbia, for which he had been officially thanked. Most Englishmen who are long resident in a foreign Capital, especially those in official positions, become ardent champions of the cause of the country where they live. Not so Sir Henry Bax-Ironside, who was by all judged to be more partial, among the warring races of the Peninsula, to the Serbs than to the Bulgars. In other ways, too, he differed from most of his colleagues in the Diplomatic Service—his mind was more subtle, more astute, and his cleverness was above the average. He had known King Ferdinand in his young days in Vienna—Ferdinand of Coburg, who could never forget that he was an officer in a Hungarian Regiment, and owned a fine palace on the Vienna Ringstrasse. He had also met in Constantinople, M. Dobrovitch, the King's chief private political Secretary, a Levantine and avowed pro-German, with whom, to the last, Sir Henry managed to keep in close relationship. He also knew how, in the Club or over a game of chess, to draw information from some of the leading Bulgarian Generals; and throughout the early months of the war he was able to forward to the Foreign Office regular reports giving the Bulgarian Staff's estimate of the situation on the Eastern Front.

Knowing as he did the opinion of the Bulgarian Staff, who early prognosticated Britain's failure in the Dardanelles, and aware of the importance attached to it by those responsible for Bulgaria's policy, Sir Henry was unable to be optimistic in his despatches as to the attitude of Bulgaria; nor could he urge with

any personal ardour that Serbia should be called upon to make those concessions of territory in Macedonia which Entente policy demanded. Any such sacrifice by Serbia, in the opinion of the British Minister, would be useless, even if the Serbs could be induced to make it; for it was his deliberate conviction that so long as King Ferdinand remained upon the throne Bulgaria would never fight against the Central Powers, except in the event of striking Allied victories.

King Ferdinand had assumed a prudently pro-Russian attitude for most of his reign; but when Bulgaria found herself isolated at Bucharest in 1913, and compelled to accept humiliating terms, he had thrown himself into the arms of Austria. Austria had been as vexed as he was at the quick growth of Serbia, and a common determination to destroy that kingdom brought public expression to the Austrian sympathies which Ferdinand had always personally felt. In that year he chose as Prime Minister M. Radoslavoff, the only Bulgarian leader of any prominence who had always displayed hostility to Russia. Moreover, as a German of Coburg, Ferdinand was further bound to the Central Powers. Though not personally attached to Germany's Imperial ruler, he, like Constantine of Greece, seems to have been fascinated by Wilhelm's splendent conception of kingship and the reality of his regal powers. He himself loved to play the autocrat; and in the earlier days of his reign his guests at State banquets had been astonished to find beneath their napkins jewelled tie-pins and brooches of very considerable value. His extravagance had contracted enormous debts; and the greatest number of his bills were accumulated in Germany. These bills were all presented, with an urgent demand for payment, in June 1915. The debts were estimated at some 7,000,000 marks. Among the King's favourites were several Germans; and Dr Gretzer, the Court Physician, had a friend in the high financial circles of Berlin. Probably at the suggestion of the Wilhelmstrasse he pressed the King

to allow him to raise the money to pay off his bills in the German market, where he assured His Majesty easy terms could be arranged. To this Ferdinand consented with great reluctance. But, according to the writer's informant,[6] too many personal secrets were known to Gretzer to make it easy for His Majesty to refuse any request which he chose insistently to proffer. The physician went to Berlin and negotiated the loan at 7½ per cent. repayable in twenty years. Gretzer had been given *carte blanche;* and in the terms of the loan was inserted a clause whereby King Ferdinand's agent bound Bulgaria to enter the war on the side of the Central Powers. Having thus raised the money Gretzer set about paying off many of the King's creditors. When he returned to Sofia in July and showed the agreement to Ferdinand, His Majesty was not unnaturally incensed, and said he would repudiate the agreement and return the money. This was impossible as a great part of it was already spent. Ferdinand dismissed his physician (in July); but his hands were tied.

This story, which is given on good authority, would be an unlikely one in most European countries. But orientalised Bulgaria was governed subterraneously. For Ferdinand, ostentatious, vain, cowardly, and extravagant, loved political machination, and frequently transacted even official business through secret agents. He was, too, of notoriously irregular habits. Soon after dismissing Gretzer he also dismissed General Fitcheff, the anglophil Chief of Staff; and there are other indications that it was in the month of July that he personally definitely pledged himself to join the Central Powers. The Sobranye (Parliament) was prorogued by him at the end of March 1915, and not summoned again until after Bulgaria had entered the war. Thenceforward he governed absolutely through his private camarilla.

Another consideration which weighed heavily with Ferdinand, as it had also weighed with King Carol of Roumania, was the reputed invincibility of the

German army. King Carol at least was no mean soldier, and he was of the deliberate opinion that whatever the combination against it the German army would never be beaten.[7] A final thought, worthy of those devil-worshippers of Irak, who sacrifice one sheep, indeed, to the merciful deity Melek Isa, but seven to the cunning and terrible Melek Taüs,[8] settled the matter for Ferdinand. In conversation with Sir Henry Bax-Ironside he exclaimed: "How can you expect me to side with you? You know perfectly well that if you lost the war my country would then be devastated by the Turks. And you and France, if you are victorious, will never allow the Serbs and Greeks to pillage Bulgaria."[9]

Thus Ferdinand, evilly calculating on the triumph of evil, accounted our very virtues an offence, and made forbearance a reason for his enmity. He had his brief hour of triumph. Now he lurks in ignominious oblivion, a discredited fugitive, in the country which produced him. But his cynical calculation was correct, and the devastation which overwhelmed Serbia and Roumania and almost all the victorious belligerents was avoided by vanquished Bulgaria.

## 5.

The hostility of the German monarch and his Government did not cause the Powers of the Entente to desist from their diplomatic efforts to bring in Bulgaria against the Central Powers. The Russian Minister did not concur in his British colleague's opinion that such efforts were foredoomed to failure. Sir Edward Grey and M. Sazonoff, the Russian Foreign Minister, actively propounded scheme after scheme which should reconcile the conflicting aims of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Roumania. In August 1914 Serbia was already being urged to make concessions to Bulgaria. Two months later we promised "important advantages to Bulgaria merely to remain neutral." When Bulgaria asked what those advantages

would be we asked the opinion of Serbia, Greece, and Roumania. We "brought pressure to bear" on those States. But, inasmuch as we were also courting the favours of Greece and Roumania, strong pressure could only be put upon Serbia, who was fighting for us, and had her back to the wall. And even her extreme predicament did not prevent her from returning a blank refusal to the Entente's suggested cession of territory. Voluntarily to cede territory to a rival is, in the eyes of any Balkan State, simply inconceivable folly. No Balkaneer who has a shred of self-respect abandons a morsel of ground to another. It is not done in the Balkans; and it seems a pity that Western European statesmen had not spent a little more time studying some of the idiosyncracies of these more backward peoples. In vain M. Sazonoff proposed that half Albania should go to Serbia in exchange for part of Macedonia; in vain the beauties of a Balkan Confederation were painted in rosy colours by Sir Edward Grey. Serbia would not cede an inch. Greece refused to agree to abandon Kavalla. Roumania could not think of restoring Southern Dobruja. The last two States, indeed, made the negotiations infinitely tedious by appearing to entertain the idea of cession, and continually submitting counter-proposals. It is certain that if M. Venizelos, the one great and far-sighted statesman produced by Balkan countries, could have had his way, Greece would have exchanged the Kavalla district of Thrace for the hope of larger gains of territory in Asia Minor.[10] But to the rest of Balkan politicians the saying that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush is a fundamental political axiom on which they base their every calculation. M. Bratianu, the subtle and talented Prime Minister of Roumania, put forward continual suggestions whereby Roumania might join the Allies, if Bulgaria joined, in return for definite promises of delimited territory in Transylvania and the Banat of Temesvar (on the north of the Danube west of Roumania). Such a suggestion travelled to London, Petrograd, and Paris;

then after comment and consultation, out to Sofia. Sofia would remark that any idea of co-operation with Bucharest was excluded, unless as a preliminary Bulgarian troops were allowed to occupy the Dobruja district seized by Roumania in 1913. The remark travelled back to the Entente Capitals, and after further comment and consultation found its way to Bucharest. The Roumanian Government countered with the plea that to yield the Dobruja while its own reward for active help was undetermined was impossible. What frontiers therefore might Roumania gain in Transylvania and the Banat? Might they or might they not expect the River Theiss and the western limit of the Banat? The western limit of the Banat would bring Roumania under the walls of Belgrade; therefore the Serbian Government must be consulted; and diplomatic despatches sped to Belgrade instructing the Entente representatives to enquire on what conditions Serbia would agree to the acquisition of the whole of the Banat by Roumania. Serbia made the usual reply—on no conditions. Sir Edward Grey and M. Delcassé appealed to M. Sazonoff, as Serbia's especial friend, to induce a less obdurate mood. M. Sazonoff suggested that if Serbia would yield the Banat she would not, for instance, be called upon to give up the Doiran-Ghevgeli sector to Greece. The proposal went, *via* the Chanceries of the Great Powers, to Athens.

And so the round of scheme and pressure and proposal went on for month after month, with divagations into astonishing bypaths which it is unnecessary to follow. Finally, on 29th May, a written project was ceremoniously submitted to Bulgaria by the Ministers of Britain, France, Russia, and Italy, which had newly joined the Entente cause. It substantially granted every legitimate aim of Bulgaria. She was to occupy *immediately* Turkish territory up to the Enos-Midia line. The Allied Powers guaranteed to Bulgaria *at the end of the war* the southern half of Macedonia, which was delimited, on the conditions that Serbia

should receive equitable compensation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that Bulgaria should make no attempt to occupy that territory until the conclusion of peace. Further, the Allied Powers "pledged themselves to use all their efforts with the Hellenic Government in order to assure the cession of Kavalla to Bulgaria," on condition that the Bulgarian army went into action against Turkey. The Powers "were disposed to look with favour upon the negotiations which Bulgaria and Roumania might desire to open for the settlement of the question of the Dobruja." Finally, Bulgaria would be given all the financial assistance she might require.

It was the high-water mark of diplomatic effort. Bulgaria did not accept the offer. Instead she requested the Entente Powers to state precisely the extent to which the compensation promised to Serbia and Greece would have to be realised before Bulgaria's aspirations in Macedonia and Western Thrace could be satisfied. The harassed diplomatists of Western Europe, whose task was complicated, since Italy's entry on their side, by Italian objections to making any promise of aggrandisement to Serbia, failed to make a comprehensive reply to this request until 4th August.

6.

In war-diplomacy Germany had the advantage of being an expert. Her military and political projects were jointly directed and strictly correlated. Between the British military and diplomatic representatives, on the contrary, there was a lack of co-ordination disastrous in war-time.[11] Germany had no scruples; we had some —too few for honour, too many for success. Britain was hampered by the promise of Constantinople which we had made to Russia. To Bulgaria the prospect of seeing Russia a neighbour on the south as well as in the north was very distasteful; nor was it with Bulgaria only that the Russian compact obstructed our diplomatic dealings. Athens and Bucharest disliked

the arrangement, and listened the more readily to Germany's insinuation that we had cleverly let the Balkan peoples pay the price to Russia for her acquiescence in our declaration of a Protectorate over Egypt.[12] On the other hand, loyalty to Serbia prevented Sir Edward Grey from ever coercing, or attempting to coerce her, to abandon coveted territory to her hated rival. Germany had no scruples of that sort. In the case of Serbian territory, of course, she could perfectly well promise to Bulgaria not only the acquisition of the region she desired in Macedonia, but also its immediate occupation. But she also did not hesitate to promise away the territory of her Allies, actual or prospective. Von der Goltz, as we have seen, promised Ferdinand that Greece should be made to cede her recent acquisitions; Turkey, who was already fighting on Germany's behalf, was forced to yield the Adrianople district. This concession Turkey did not make without a struggle. So obstinate did she show herself that a special German agent was despatched to Sofia. The regular Minister was recalled (24th June 1915), and Colonel von Leipsig, Germany's military attaché in Constantinople, was appointed to take his place. This martial diplomatist quickly arranged that the Turkish Minister should sign away his country's estates, and by the Turco-Bulgar pact Bulgaria acquired not only the Adrianople district, but the whole of Eastern Thrace, up to the Enos-Midia line. Thus Germany took the wind out of Entente's sails by guaranteeing the acquisition of the only territory which we had been able to offer for Bulgaria's *immediate* occupation.[13] Colonel von Leipsig, having accomplished his task, returned to Turkey, where he was murdered a few days afterwards.

In the fabric of Balkan politics a dark strand of murder runs across the woof of intimidation and the weft of bribery. Its coarse texture was marked by Lord Kitchener. He opined that Bulgaria could be bought. He even thought that King Ferdinand could be bought. This belief was not shared in regard to

the King by the British representatives on the spot. But Sir Edward Grey was induced to despatch to Sofia a gentleman well versed in Byzantine politics with the task of procuring the support of as many of the principal personages of Bulgarian society as he could succeed in influencing. The sum of two million pounds was put at his disposal, to be spent without account. Mr Buxton had appealed to the nobler side of the Bulgarian character. The new emissary, whom we will call Mr F., was commissioned to appeal to the baser. The mistake of sending someone whose position and authority were not properly defined was not repeated, and Mr F. was nominated First Secretary at the Legation. He thus worked in subordination to the British Minister. He chose as his chief distributing agent a native politician of some reputation, who had held Cabinet rank. Most of the funds passed through his hands; about half remained there. Some result was achieved; a few waverers showed signs of perceiving, more clearly than before, the justice of the Entente cause. But the principal agent was ill-chosen. There hung over his head a trial for high treason, incurred on an earlier occasion, and then suspended. When the critical moment came for mobilisation to be decreed (in September), and this gentleman's activities might be expected to reach their culmination, the Prime Minister mentioned to him that the trial might at any moment be resumed, and reminded him that the penalty for his crime was hanging. It produced an instantaneous effect; and the protagonist of our cause became a convinced Germanophil. This gentleman is now reputed to be the second richest person in Bulgaria; but his opportunities of displaying his wealth have been limited, as the post-war Prime Minister, M. Stambolisky, ordered his incarceration.

## 7.

This ambiguous partisan was, perhaps, not likely to succeed where more worthy native champions of the

Entente cause failed. A persistent friend of England throughout was M. Gueshoff, who as Prime Minister had been responsible for the Treaties with Serbia and Greece before the First Balkan War. He had spent twenty years of his life in Manchester, and never ceased to oppose M. Radoslavoff's policy. Another Opposition leader whose fidelity to the Entente was never in doubt was M. Stambolisky, who has been Prime Minister since the conclusion of the war, and is likely to continue in office until he be forcibly removed. He is Bulgaria's strongest man, a Bismarck in build and in method. Unfortunately he did not exert in 1915 anything approaching the influence which he now wields. He was a prominent member of the Peasant Party, however, and with his leader, Dr Vladoff, worked steadily to keep alive the pro-Russian sentiments of his followers. The peasants in Bulgaria were pro-Russian almost to a man, and the prospect of fighting against their kinsmen and liberators never ceased to be repugnant to them. One of their number, General Radko Dimitrieff, had joined the Russian army on the outbreak of war and held high command in it. M. Stambolisky kept in touch with Sir Henry Bax-Ironside, paying stealthy visits to the British Legation in the early hours of the morning for several confidential conversations. After the war, on 29th January 1920, in Sofia, he informed the author that if Sir Henry had remained longer at his post he (M. Stambolisky) could have brought in Bulgaria with the Entente. He said that his hold on the peasants was strong enough for him to have prevented their mobilisation, unless it were to fight on the same side as Russia. He would have had, however, to feel secure in the support, official or unofficial, of Britain. Yet it seems clear that certain definite offers made to the British Minister by Dr Vladoff in February 1915, and repeated in April, were not, for some unaccountable reason, communicated to the Foreign Office.

This country has long enjoyed considerable popularity in Bulgaria. Several prominent Englishmen

have espoused her cause; and at Robert College, near Constantinople, many Bulgarians who afterwards play their part in politics have imbibed a respect for British and American political institutions. Bulgaria reposed a greater trust in British diplomacy than in Russian; and it was as a result of a rivalry that unfortunately grew up between the British and Russian Ministers in Sofia that Sir Edward Grey recalled Bax-Ironside.

M. Savinsky, Russia's representative, refused to believe that Bulgaria could ever show such a depth of ingratitude as to fight against the nation which had freed her from the Ottoman yoke; and he repeatedly reported (in contradiction of the British envoy) that a large and immediate territorial compensation would bring Bulgaria in with the Entente. Another point of difference, and a cause of jealousy to the Russian, was that M. Radoslavoff, the pro-German Prime Minister, would never see either the Russian or the French Ministers, but received frequent visits from Sir Henry Bax-Ironside. Thus M. Savinsky found it difficult to work in close conjunction with his British colleague, and reported in this sense to his Government, which repeated the information to London. Sir Edward Grey, who already had been led by Mr Buxton's report to regard Sir Henry as unsuitable, and who possibly considered that he carried out his instructions in the conviction that they could not attain their object, therefore recalled the British Minister, and appointed in his place Mr O'Beirne. Mr O'Beirne was Counsellor of Embassy in Petrograd, spoke Russian, and was conversant with the Russian view of the Balkan situation. He had, however, never previously held an independent post in the diplomatic service, and had no earlier experience of Bulgarian affairs. To put him in charge of negotiations so delicate, so intricate, and so vital, which moreover were at the time in mid-course, was a strange experiment, and proved to be a blunder. It was so judged at the time by Ententophil circles in Bulgaria. When Sir Henry Bax-Ironside quitted Sofia on 17th July the leader of every political group

of any importance was present at the station to bid him farewell. The presence of M. Radoslavoff and M. Stambolisky on the same platform was a remarkable tribute to his personality. The sharp difference between the separate groups was shown very soon afterwards, when the Opposition Leaders of the Sobranye made a representation to King Ferdinand, threatening him with the loss of his throne if he declared war on the Entente. M. Stambolisky was particularly outspoken on that occasion. Blunt words are followed by rude deeds in Sofia, and he was thrown into prison by order of His Majesty. There he remained till near the end of the war, when he emerged to lead a revolution, to depose his oppressor, and to become Prime Minister and virtual Regent of his country.

8.

M. Radoslavoff had little difficulty in foiling his remaining antagonists. Quiet in manner, smooth in speech, chary in his use of words, he was the type of dissembling politician. Liars may be found in most countries; the Orient produces dissemblers, whose whole manner supports the message on the lips, and lends sincerity to untruth. The Russian and French representatives in Sofia had, since the first threat of a European war, attempted to compass his downfall; but he had thwarted them. His position had been unsafe in the late summer of 1914, but he had secured it with the help of his monarch and the blundering diplomacy of his enemies. A lukewarm Chamber had been closed; a formidable political opponent imprisoned; his most versatile diplomatic adversary recalled. The negotiations with the Entente Powers which followed were for him only opportunities to exercise his powers of dissimulation. He "candidly confessed" to the Allied diplomatists in August that conversations were proceeding between Bulgaria and Turkey in regard to the Adrianople district—a compact having already, as we now know, been signed between the two countries

on this subject: and in September he denied that any such Treaty had been concluded. In August it was announced that the Bulgarian army manœuvres would be held on the Serbian frontier. The choice of district was explained in such a way as not to perturb, apparently, the Entente representatives; and the British military attaché attended them without becoming unduly pessimistic as to Bulgaria's ultimate attitude. The War Minister, it seems, promised Bulgarian aid to both sides. Next month (21st September) general mobilisation was ordered. This brought an expostulation and a demand for explanation from the new British Minister. Radoslavoff gravely announced that there was not the slightest intention of attacking Serbia or Greece, and that Bulgaria only intended that her neutrality should be "armed." He had the exquisite impudence to add that it would help the Entente diplomacy in Serbia, by making her more ready to yield to our solicitations that she should cede territory! His explanation seems to have been taken perfectly seriously. The idea was mooted in Entente circles that the coveted part of Macedonia should be occupied by French and British troops. To Serbia this would appear a guarantee that Bulgaria would not be allowed to seize it prematurely: to Bulgaria a guarantee that she should have it eventually. Radoslavoff deprecated the project on the ground that it would be deplorable if British troops found themselves involved in affrays with Bulgarian or Serb soldiers; and added that never would Bulgars be found to fire on Englishmen. When the moment came for the British Minister to ask for his passport and depart, M. Radoslavoff still piteously complained that the Allies had not believed Bulgarian assurances of the pacific nature of the mobilisation.

Among all the futilities of diplomatic make-believe we find one suggestion that might have produced the desired result. M. Sazonoff proposed that Russian troops, even without the sanction of the Bulgarian Government, should be landed at the two Black Sea

ports of Varna and Burgas: they would almost certainly, he argued, be received with enthusiasm by the Bulgar peasants: they would proclaim a holy war, in which a joint Russo-Bulgarian force would enter Constantinople and restore St Sophia to the mother church: such a movement, backed by certain of the Opposition Leaders, might sweep Ferdinand off his feet and carry him to Constantinople; or if he opposed, sweep him off his throne.

Sir Edward Grey vetoed the project. He protested that it would inflict upon Bulgaria the wrong that Germany had done to Belgium. We had made the crime of her violation of neutral territory a *casus belli*. We could not proceed to commit the same crime ourselves.

It is probable, it is almost certain, that at any time during the negotiations with Bulgaria a great Allied victory, or a clear indication that final victory was assured, would have brought all the wavering States of South-Eastern Europe into the war on our side. The capture of Constantinople, the invasion of Hungary by Russia, a strong display of military force in support of Serbia, or even steady progress by the Franco-British armies on the Western Front, might have sufficed to convince King Ferdinand that, whatever his predilections, expediency enjoined participation against the Central Powers. Bulgaria never took her eyes off the military situation. But none of those signs were visible, which the majority of the country probably looked for eagerly enough. Our failure in the Dardanelles: our inability to advance in France and Flanders: above all, the great advance in Galicia by von Mackensen in May 1915, confirmed and rendered unchangeable the Government's Austro-Germanophil policy. Throughout that month the Russian armies were in retreat, and Allied diplomacy was routed. At the very end of May 1915, Count Tarnowsky, Austrian Minister in Sofia, initialed a preliminary agreement with Bulgaria.[14] On 17th July, three days after the Russians had fallen back to the Nareff and

the great Austro-German offensive from the Baltic to the frontier of Roumania had begun, Bulgaria signed a definitive treaty with Germany, Austria, and Turkey; after which diplomatic negotiation with the Western Allies was continued merely as a feint till Germany's plans should be matured. By the terms of the treaty Bulgaria was to gain all Serbian Macedonia and Salonika: Epirus, which belonged to Greece and had no Bulgarian population: the Enos-Midia boundary on her south-east: and, in certain eventualities, a large portion of the Dobruja. Germany had outbidden us by offering a much larger slice of Macedonia: she had also been able to offer immediate occupation. When Marshal Mackensen's task in Galicia was completed he took command of the huge army which had been massing on the Serbian frontier. Serbia was to be "wiped off the map." Bulgarian mobilisation coincided with its preparations to advance; and four days after Mackensen had crossed the Save (7th October) the Bulgars attacked Serbia's flank (11th October). Twenty thousand Allied troops who, with the concurrence of the Greek Government, landed at Salonika on 7th October, were a poor set-off to Mackensen's 400,000 men. The heroic Serbs, who had been assured of Allied aid, were completely overwhelmed and their country despoiled. The immediate result of Bulgaria's accession to the Central Powers and Serbia's fidelity to us was the gratification of the former's lust of territory, and, for the latter, destruction of their homes and the total loss of their country.

9.

Sir Edward Grey's diplomacy was unsuited to the situation in the Balkans. He persisted to the end in trying to effect an arrangement by ordinary diplomatic methods. His efforts had seemed to score a belated success when the Serb Parliament, sheltering at Nish from the oncoming storm of invasion, agreed at the end of three days' secret sittings to the cession

of Macedonian territory to Bulgaria (24th August); but the sacrifice was never endorsed by the military party; and when Bulgaria's decision to mobilise was announced the Serbs' defiant love of combat flashed out, and the Entente Powers were requested to sanction a forestalling attack on the hated neighbour: Sofia, it was believed, could be occupied and Bulgarian action paralysed. The request was refused. Sir Edward Grey argued that the Bulgarian people would thereby certainly be incited to take action against Serbia: and that the *casus fœderis* with Greece would fall, since Serbia, not Bulgaria, would be the aggressor. Sir Edward Grey supposed that the technical treaty obligation to help Serbia would hold King Constantine to a course prejudicial to his interests—and this in spite of M. Venizelos's warning that the King was determined in no circumstances to fight against his Imperial brother-in-law. The Serbs knew well enough that Bulgaria was determined to attack them, and that their only chance, at that last moment, was to crush Bulgaria before she was ready. Both M. Sazonoff and the French Ambassador in Petrograd thought that permission should be granted; force alone counted in the Balkans, they maintained. Grey would not admit it.

Unbending in his stern political morality, he apparently felt that the same standards of conduct held good in wartime as in peace, and that in dealing with nations whose motives were hatred, revenge, and rapacity, for whom not to follow up a quarrel was dishonouring, the same methods had to be employed as with countries which are swayed by other and nobler sentiments. On many occasions in British history desperate situations have demanded, and have found, desperate remedies. A hundred and fifteen years earlier William Pitt, faced by peril at home and abroad, had effected the union of the Irish and English Parliaments by rude methods still habitual in Irish, though no longer in English, political life; and his successors sanctioned the bombardment of

Copenhagen which broke up the hostile "Armed Neutrality League." The law itself so far departs from morality as to absolve the criminal who peaches; and when the Germans used poison-gas we adopted the same foul weapon. Sir Edward Grey seemed himself to admit that the principle of retaliation in kind was applicable in the diplomatic sphere in the course of his disputes over contraband with America. Answering Mr Bryan in February 1915, the British Foreign Minister wrote: "It is impossible for one belligerent to depart from rules and precedents and for the other to remain bound by them."

Yet, in regard to Bulgaria, he made no more than spasmodic, reluctant attempts to check and to match the methods of Germany. Bulgaria might only have been won, not through Ferdinand and his Prime Minister, but in spite of them. The elements favourable to the Entente were the peasants, and the Opposition Leaders. When mobilisation was ordered the Government deemed it wise to announce as reason that "the Entente Powers had sanctioned the occupation of Macedonia by Bulgaria"; and recruits on the march sang Russian airs. Had we agreed to the landing of Russian troops at the Black Sea ports, it is possible, even probable, that a peasant rising might have been organised and a democratic government substituted for that of the Coburg autocrat; and the function of diplomacy would have been fulfilled in that the results of the war would have been anticipated.[15] If Sir Henry Bax-Ironside had been instructed to find a leader for the venture, he had one ready to hand. M. Stambolisky, it can scarce be doubted, would have heartily welcomed the arrival of Russian soldiers to lend force to his arguments. He would have given a *post factum* sanction to the violation of Bulgarian territory, much as M. Venizelos gave his sanction to the violation of Greek territory. In Greece we forcefully supported the cause of constitutional government against autocracy; in Bulgaria we did not dare. Since to secure Bulgarian aid would

have shortened the war, in the opinion of competent judges, by two years, and because the cost of failure would have to be paid in British lives, it is legitimate to argue that history would have found excuse, and even justification, for more arbitrary methods of retaliation upon Austro-German war-diplomacy.

But violence and intrigue were alike alien to the character of Sir Edward Grey. He was a great peace Minister, unable or unwilling to adapt himself to the arts of war. For him it would have been simple hypocrisy to sanction in Bulgaria a trespass against international law, for the commission of which he had declared war upon Germany. To him, hard as he strove in his own way to bring the Bulgarians in, it probably seemed fitting that they should join our enemies. He made them a straight offer (on 29th May). They refused. The issue, he believed, was right against might. If they chose to join the champions of *realpolitik* it was natural; for in their Mongol origin they had racial kinship with the Turks, Hungarians, and also the north-east Prussians, who were all mustered in the opposite camp.

Moreover Sir Edward Grey's insularity and lack of imagination clearly prevented his ever even fully measuring the disparity between his own political ideas and those that prevailed in South-Eastern Europe. In common with most untravelled Englishmen he judged the Balkan peoples largely by their representatives in London. Almost every nation does us the compliment of sending as ambassador one of their most distinguished personages. He was thus easily misled by the perfectly sincere professions of gentlemen who were far from typical of their countrymen. As in the case of Prince Lichnowsky he failed to see the nation for its ambassador.

Before Sir Edward Grey left the Foreign Office in 1916 (December) he had secured the assistance of Portugal, who thereby tore up her agreement with Germany as to the eventual disposal of her colonies. The Liberal element of Greece fought by our side

at Salonika. His firm, judicious handling of the diplomatic side of the contraband question made it possible for the U.S.A. to join us later, and prevented Sweden from joining our enemies as she seemed inclined to do in the summer of 1915. His appeal was invariably to a nation's nobler sentiments. Where those sentiments preponderated the nation responded to his argument.

Sir Edward Grey had assumed office on 11th December 1905, and he thus held it for a longer continuous period than any other Foreign Secretary since the creation of the post in 1782. Before accepting the offer of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman he had made the condition that he must be given a free hand in foreign policy. This courageous assertion of a cherished principle, and the disinterestedness and determination which it connoted, never deserted him. So long as his business was the securing or the maintenance of peace his passionate devotion to the cause, his fearless honesty, his lack of bias or ill-will against any foreign nation, gave him an unrivalled authority in Europe; and he possesses the immortal title to fame of having carried very high the honour of England before the nations of the world. Historians will probably mark the meridian of his diplomacy in the winter 1912-1913. Thereafter his influence declined. Opposing and malignant forces overbore him; and his idealistic cast of mind was unsuited to the conditions of a world torn by war-passions which he had striven nobly but unavailingly to still.

# APPENDIX

The figures in brackets refer to the pages of this book.

## CHAPTER I

1. Lord Salisbury, *Biographical Essays*, pp. 11 and 12.
2. *The Memoirs of Count Witte*, p. 107.
3. Mr (afterwards Sir John) Kennedy, British Chargé d'Affaires in St Petersburg.
4. Witte, 120.
5. Gooch and Masterman, *A Hundred Years of British Foreign Policy*.
6. See *Contemporary Review*, July 1921: "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance," by Robert Young.
7. On p. 125 of his *Memoirs* Count Witte mentions that throughout the Quai d'Orsay believed war between Russia and Japan to be impossible; and German diplomacy was equally misinformed, if we are to believe Baron von Eckardstein (*Ten Years at the Court of St James's*, p. 250). (p. 103.)
8. Its full text has been published by the "Union of Democratic Control" in *The Secret Treaties*, 1918. (p. 107.)
9. Mr Lloyd-George's words were as follows: "The British Empire must behave like a gentleman, and when you come to deal with a country that has stood by you in trouble—stood well by you—are you to bring the Alliance to an end when the trouble is over? I say that would not be becoming of the British Empire in dealing with a faithful ally." (p. 107.)

## CHAPTER II

1. Sir Valentine Chirol in *Quarterly Review*, October 1914.
2. Baron von Eckardstein, *Ten Years at the Court of St James's*, passim.
3. Sir Valentine Chirol in *Quarterly Review*, October 1914.
4. A close examination of the German text reveals a wording which diminishes the force of Germany's engagement, and

which was not, I have been informed, at first noticed by the Foreign Office. In any case the German contention that they could exercise no influence over Russia's policy in Manchuria, because there were no German consuls there, was certainly a mere diplomatic quibble. (p. 114.)

5. The total number of Moslems in the world is usually given as 222 million, of whom a third are British subjects. (p. 114.)
6. Eckardstein, p. 228.
7. Sir Thos. Barclay, *Thirty Years' Anglo-French Reminiscences.*
8. Minor points in the Convention were:—In *Newfoundland*—France abandoned, against indemnity, certain rights of drying fish and lobster catching, which had caused keen irritation among the islanders. In *Western Africa* Britain made several minor territorial concessions; an all-French route was created from the Niger to Lake Tchad. In *Morocco* (under heading *Gibraltar*) both Governments agreed to permit no fortifications to be raised on the Moroccan coast between Melilla and the heights dominating the right bank of the Sébou. Both Powers promised to lend diplomatic aid for the carrying out of the provisions of the Convention relative to Egypt and Morocco. In *Siam* the territory unallotted by the Convention of London of 1896 was (to the greater extent) to come under British influence. In *Madagascar* British claims relative to the Customs were abandoned. In *the New Hebrides* it was decided to settle in a friendly spirit the vexed question of the validity of land-property titles of French and British subjects. (p. 122).
9. Many reports, apparently well-founded, appeared in the French Press to the effect that Britain was prepared to land 100,000 men in Schleswig-Holstein; and the reports have found their way into English text-books (notably Gooch and Masterman's *Hundred Years of British Foreign Policy* and Lord Loreburn's *How the War came*). I have the authority of a former Foreign Office official who had a leading part in the Anglo-French negotiations for the statement that Lord Lansdowne never then or at any other time made to France an offer of military assistance. On the other hand there was naturally a good deal of discussion in Anglo-French naval and military circles as to the possibility of British intervention and the form it might take. (p. 126.)

## CHAPTER III.

General reference: H. N. Brailsford: *Macedonia.*

1. Wickham Steed, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, p. 221.
2. Réné Pinon in *L'Europe et l'Empire Ottoman*, quoted by Lémonon, p. 426.
3. Wickham Steed, p. 222.
4. *Ibid.*, 229.
5. Holland Rose, *Development of the European Nations*, pp. 188 and 189.
6. Lord Lansdowne by no means neglected legitimate British commercial interests, as for instance when he insisted with the Porte in 1905 that the concession of the Smyrna-Aidin Railway Company should be extended till 1940. (p. 138.)

## CHAPTER IV

1. *World's Work*, July 1913.
2. A. G. Gardiner, *Prophets, Priests, and Kings* (Sir Edward Grey, Bart.).
3. This information I have from a then senior member of the Foreign Office, since retired. It was, of course, corroborated by Sir Edward Grey in his speech to the House of Commons on 3rd August 1914. He then showed that his attitude was in this respect identical in 1906, 1911 (Agadir), and 1912 (Balkan Wars). But in 1912 the Franco-British understanding was recorded in "unofficial letters" instead of remaining only verbal.

   The 1906 conversations were authorised by Sir E. Grey, and not by the Cabinet—a General Election being in progress and Ministers "scattered over the country." On no occasion (prior to 1914) was the authorisation of these naval and military consultations announced to the public. (p. 143.)
4. M. Raymond Poincaré, article contributed to the *Morning Post*, 21st August 1921.
5. Sir Valentine Chirol, *Quarterly Review*, October 1914.
6. Sir Sidney Lee, Article on King Edward VII. contributed to *The Times*, 22nd July 1921.

## CHAPTER V

1. Wickham Steed, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, pp. 227 *et seq.* An interesting account will also be found there of Baron Aehrenthal's attempt to prove the existence of a Serb plot

by means of documents fabricated under the supervision of a member of the Austro-Hungarian Legation in Belgrade, and of the Austrian police. (p. 151.)

2. The actual visit of the Kaiser to Vienna was made on 14th May 1909—and Russia had already given way to Austria in March, as a result of the German Ambassador's (Count Pourtalès') threat of military action (Poincaré, *Origins of the War*, pp. 103 and 105). The Kaiser's demonstration was therefore a typically spectacular appropriation of a victory already won. (p. 152.)
3. Morgenthau, *Secrets of the Bosphorus*, pp. 48-52.

For the account here given of the Bagdad Railway I have relied for facts chiefly on an article contributed to the *Quarterly Review* in 1917, by a member of the Foreign Office, of which I have been favoured with one of the privately printed copies. This article sets forth the official view of the negotiations, and is, I am informed, the only case on record of an article written by a (then) active member of the Foreign Office in the public Press on the subject of his official business. It was authorised in order to show (in answer to German anti-British propaganda) how far the British Government had been ready to go in conciliating and making concessions to Germany before the war.

It is to be hoped that the Foreign Office may now more frequently see its way frankly to vindicate the policy it has adopted, especially in questions that are rather technical or obscure.

The objection may be made to this *Quarterly Review* article that the writer goes out of his way repeatedly to assert his impartiality and independence of view. He obviously writes as independently as he can, but having been himself a principal in the 1914 negotiations, he cannot possibly put himself in the position of an outside judge of the matter. It is an *ex parte* statement, and would have more value if it were frankly acknowledged as such, and if phrases such as "it is understood" and "a scrupulously fair statement," calculated to mislead the public, were omitted.

It may be of interest to record that the construction of the Taurus section of the Bagdad line was completed about a month before the signature of the Armistice in 1918—just in time for the Germans fighting in Syria and Palestine

with the Turks to get away by it! The last and most difficult section, through the Taurus mountains, was largely built by British and Armenian prisoners of war under the rifle-butt of Turkish taskmasters. Many of them died from under-nourishment and over-exertion.

## CHAPTER VI

General reference for the Agadir incident—Schmitt, *England and Germany*, Chapter XI.

1. Poincaré, *Origins of the War*, p. 95.
2. M. Take Jonescu, the Roumanian statesman.
3. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. i., p. 103.
4. *World's Work*, July 1913.
5. As *Times* correspondent in Albania for the arrival of Prince William of Wied from Germany, the author was an eye-witness of this ridiculous diplomatic contest. (p. 187.)
6. The author was then temporary *Times* correspondent in Constantinople. (p. 187.)

## CHAPTER VII

General Reference—Schmitt, *England and Germany*, 1740-1914, and the published Official Papers.

*Note.*—Events which several well-documented volumes have not exhaustively disposed of can obviously not be covered in a chapter. I have therefore here confined myself to consideration of the methods and policy of Sir Edward Grey, to details and developments essential to the narrative, and to some features which happened to come specially under my own observation.

1. During the war a Commission recommended that members of the Diplomatic Service and Foreign Office should change places as frequently as possible; and the recommendation has been adopted. In practice, however, the difficulty arises that exchange is almost impossible unless the member of one branch of the Service can find another of about the same seniority in the other to take his place. (p. 190.)
2. Bishop (Moule) of Durham, in a letter to *The Times*, 17th July 1914.
3. Eckardstein, *Ten Years at the Court of St James's*, p. 137.
4. This information I have from one of the officials at Buckingham

Palace who was responsible for the arrangements for the Kaiser's visit. (p. 193.)

5. Sir Horace Rumbold, G.C.B., British Ambassador in Vienna from 1896 to 1900, in the *National Review* for November 1902.
6. Austin Harrison, *England and Germany*, pp. 118 and *passim.*
7. Sir Valentine Chirol, *Quarterly Review*, October 1914. As an instance may be quoted the Kaiser's words at the opening of a bridge over the Rhine at Mayence (1st May 1905):— "This work, destined to develop peaceful communications, might serve for graver purposes." (p. 195.)
8. His estimate of Kaiser William, written only two years after his accession, is one of the most perspicuous and prophetic characterisations ever penned. It was reproduced in *The Times* of 12th December 1914. (p. 196.)
9. In order to forestall the charge of merely being wise after the event, I may be allowed to mention that I used almost these words in a conversation with King Carol of Roumania in December 1912, in Bucharest. That monarch (a Hohenzollern) received me in audience, and took the opportunity to do a little German propaganda by taxing me with the idleness of British fears of German aggression. Germany, he said in so many words, had no intention whatever of making war on England.

   I ventured to make a comparison between our respective positions and those of Roumania and Bulgaria. Roumania, I knew, had no intention of making war on Bulgaria, yet a war might break out between the two. His Majesty seemed to be impressed by the parallel. (p. 196.)
10. Chirol, *Quarterly Review*, October 1914.
11. The Kaiser's admonition to the German troops about to embark for China in 1900 came as a revelation and a warning to many: "When you meet the foe you will defeat him. No quarter will be given, no prisoners will be taken. . . . Just as the Huns a thousand years ago under the leadership of Attila gained a reputation in virtue of which they still live in historical tradition, so may the name of Germany become known in such a manner in China that no Chinaman will ever again even dare to look askance at a German." (p. 198.)
12. Another reason for Germany's reluctance to make war before the year 1913 was passed is worth giving, fantastic though it

be, because of the vogue which it had in German diplomatic circles, and amongst others, with Herr von Jagow, at one time Ambassador in Rome, and later Foreign Minister. It was a prophecy said to have been made to Prince William of Prussia, as he then was, in the year of revolution 1849. A necromancer informed him that the Empire, for which he even then longed, would be established "when the figures of the year had been added to the year"—*i.e.* 1849 + 1 + 8 + 4 + 9 = 1871; that the year of his death would be 1871 + 1 + 8 + 7 + 1 = 1888; and the year of the death of the German Empire 1888 + 1 + 8 + 8 + 8 = 1913. (p. 201.)

13. Sir Wm. Haggard, formerly British Minister in Rio Janeiro, in a letter to *The Times*, 18th November 1921.
14. Holland Rose, *Development of the European Nations*, p. 645.
15. See Raymond Poincaré, *The Origins of the War*, p. 237, where it is translated as follows: "The hesitating attitude of the British Government is of a nature that may lead to the most terrible consequences, for here in Berlin they have the greatest hopes of success in a struggle against France and Russia alone. The possibility of the intervention of Britain is the only eventuality that has any effect on the Emperor, his Government, and every interest. . . . The announcement of British intervention will therefore tend to have a preventive effect." (p. 206.)
16. See an article by H. Wickham Steed in the *Nineteenth Century and After*, for February 1916, and Poincaré, *Origins of the War*, pp. 162-165. The following are significant facts: The usual police precautions of safety were omitted: an attempt on the life of the Archduke was made in the morning by the son of a police officer of Serajevo (of Yugo-Slav race in the Austro-Hungarian service): even after this first attempt the Archduke was allowed to drive in the afternoon in an open carriage through unguarded streets. (p. 206.)
17. M. Take Jonescu, the Roumanian statesman, averred in a letter to *The Times* on 10th August 1917, that he was in a position to know that Herr von Tschirschky (German Ambassador in Vienna) "took part in drafting" the Note; and in the Austrian Red Book (1919) it appears certainly that he received a full copy on 21st July. During a recent libel action in Berlin a letter dated 9th December 1914 was produced from Count Lerchenfeld, then Bavarian

Minister in Berlin, to Count Hertling, his Prime Minister in Munich, according to which the ultimatum was known in outline to the Bavarian Government from 18th July onward (*The Times*, 29th April 1922). Herr Zimmermann, a member of the German Government, admitted in a letter to von dem Bussche on 11th August 1917, that the Wilhelmstrasse had cognisance of the Austrian Note twelve hours before it was handed to Serbia (Poincaré, pp. 213-214).

18. Pourtalès, the German Ambassador in St Petersburg, seems to have reckoned that Russia would fail Serbia at the last moment, as in 1909—and thus to have greatly misled his Government. (p. 208.)
19. Holland Rose, p. 643.
20. "The efforts of a lifetime go for nothing," he exclaimed to Mr Walter Page, the American Ambassador. "I feel like a man who has wasted his life." Biography of Mr W. Page, *World's Work*, November 1921, p. 537. (p. 210.)
21. According to Prince L. Windischgraetz this telegram was received by Berchtold when he was having luncheon at the German Embassy, where it caused considerable annoyance. Berchtold, however, agreed to Grey's proposal (to Berlin), but his consent was not forwarded from Berlin to London. (*My Memoirs*, Prince L. Windischgraetz, p. 56.) (p. 213.)
22. *World's Work*, November 1921, pp. 533-546.

## CHAPTER VIII

I have made copious use of the concluding chapters of Sir Sidney Low's book, *Italy and the War*, in which he gives a full and vivid account of the events which led up to Italy's entry on the side of the Entente Powers.

1. Guildhall speech, 9th November 1904.
2. Saxon Mills, *Life of Sir Edward Cook*, p. 272.
3. Nelson's *History of the War*, vol. vii., p. 67.
4. Sidney Low, *Italy and the War*, pp. 248 and 249.
5. Italian Green Book, No. 5.
6. Italian Green Book, No. 16.
7. Sidney Low, p. 274.
8. *Souvenirs de Guerre de M. Erzberger*, Chapter XI. Germany's offer of temporal power was actually made to the Papacy in the early months of 1916. (p. 223.)

9. Sidney Low, p. 245.
10. *Contemporary Review*, October 1921, "Mathias Erzberger," by O. de L., p. 456.
11. Sidney Low, pp. 280 and 283.
12. In conversation with a friend of the writer's. (p. 238.)
13. By the secret clauses of the Treaty of Töplitz, 9th September 1813.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Note.*—I was in Sofia on behalf of *The Times* in January and February, 1920, and had opportunities of conversing with many persons who had been there during the 1915 negotiations, some having had a part in them. I have also been given access to confidential documents relating to those negotiations, to which, however, I am not permitted to refer specifically.

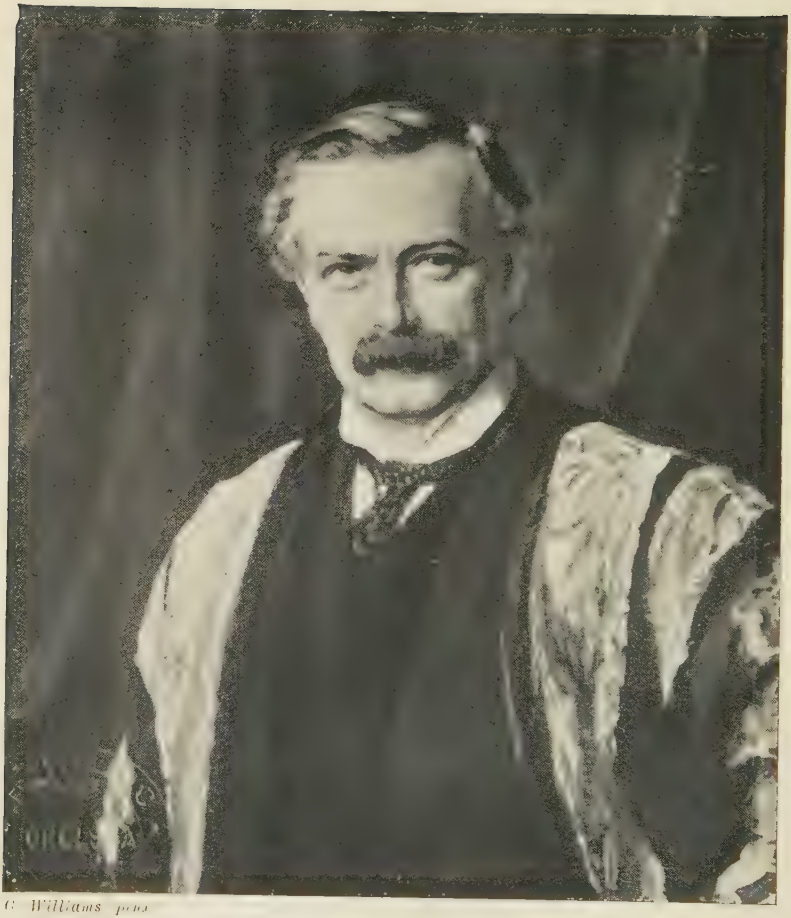
1. I do not except the Balkan War of 1912. The alliance of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro was secretly concluded by one or two enlightened leaders in each State, for a common purpose which each saw could not be realised otherwise. But there was no union of peoples. Their armies were induced to fight the Turks simultaneously, that was all; and the moment victory was won racial animosities had free play again and caused the Second Balkan War. It was the only occasion in six centuries when they united against the Ottomans, whose entry into Europe was facilitated by their divisions. (p. 242.)
2. Of these, fourteen were Turkish Deputies from Western Thrace, and seven actually members of the "Committee of Union and Progress" (Young Turk). This was one of the channels through which Germany, predominant in Constantinople, exercised influence in Sofia before the Sobranye (Bulgarian Parliament) was closed by King Ferdinand. (p. 243.)
3. Noel Buxton, *Balkan Problems and European Peace*, p. 91.
4. Sir Maurice Hankey, *Diplomacy by Conference.* Paper read to the British Institute of International Affairs on 2nd November 1920, and subsequently printed and circulated. (Also published in the *Round Table.*)
5. *Times' History of the War*, part lxxxiv., p. 224.
6. It is, of course, impossible to vouch for the whole truth of this story, but it was told me by an Englishman who was in the employ and an intimate acquaintance of the ex-King. (p. 249.)

7. In conversation with Sir John Kennedy in Bucharest, 1901.
8. W. A. and E. T. A. Wigram, *The Cradle of Mankind*, p. 104.
9. For this I have the authority of Sir Henry Bax-Ironside. (p. 250.)
10. See M. Venizelos's brilliant memoranda to King Constantine on the question of Greece's entry into the war. Kerofilas, *Eleftherios Venizelos*, chap. xiii. (p. 251.)
11. On one occasion Lord Kitchener had counselled inactivity to the Serbian army when they intended to attack. They followed his advice and, to the surprise of the diplomats at Belgrade, both of the Entente and Central Powers, did nothing. The British Minister there could not explain: and in Entente circles doubts actually got about as to Serbia's loyalty! (p. 253.)
12. Sir Valentine Chirol, *The Egyptian Problem*, p. 124.
13. Our negotiators were handicapped throughout by the failure of European diplomacy, even since the Treaty of Berlin, to implement its undertakings in the Balkans (see p. 188). An excuse was thereby provided to Bulgaria to demand what was called "*realnia garantsia*," *i.e.*, territory, not promissory notes. (p. 254.)
14. This date was given me by Count Tarnowsky himself in a conversation I had with him in the Club des Chasseurs at Warsaw on 18th July 1920. Count Tarnowsky, by the break-up of the Hapsburg dominions, has become a Polish subject. He was speaking from memory, and tried to place the date by recalling the progress of the Austro-German Armies. From other sources it seems likely that the agreement was signed in the first week in June. (p. 260.)
15. Having said some hard things about ex-King Ferdinand, I should like to place on record my feelings of respect for the present King, his son Boris, who has inherited all the noble qualities of his mother, and is as gracious a gentleman as anyone could wish to meet. (p. 263.)

# PART III

## Right Hon. DAVID LLOYD-GEORGE, O.M.

*Prime Minister*—1916(Dec.)-1922.



C. Williams pinx.

DAVID LLOYD-GEORGE.

[*Face p.* 279.

# CHAPTER I

## FOREIGN POLICY POPULARISED

"Politics are vulgar when they are not liberalised by history, and history fades into mere literature when it loses sight of its relation to practical politics."

Sir JOHN SEELEY.

### 1.

THE foreign policy of Britain, during the last four years of the period covered by this book, has been conducted by a Prime Minister, who, like Lord Salisbury, preferred to be his own Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. During his premiership Mr Arthur Balfour and Lord Curzon of Kedleston have held the Foreign Secretaryship; both have had exceptional qualifications for the post; but they have acquiesced in the virtual relegation of the Foreign Office to a subsidiary department of the premiership. It was a natural consequence of war conditions that the relative independence of a Lord Lansdowne or a Lord Grey should disappear. But the complete depression of the Foreign Office to the position of an information department has been unduly prolonged by Mr Lloyd-George, who learned diplomacy during the war. He realised, especially in our dealings with Balkan States, the cumbrousness of the regular diplomatic machinery, and acquired a distaste for it.

The Prime Minister had made no special study of Foreign Affairs before 1914. He had not had the time; he has never been either a leisured man or a student. He has had to fight every inch of his political route; and only comparatively late in his career did his eyes ever stray even for a casual glance

beyond the confines of the British Isles. For a long time, indeed, they did not look beyond the hills of his native Wales. He was brought up in the cottage of his uncle, a shoemaker, in the small village of Llanystumdwy, two miles from the Welsh sea-coast. His young sympathies were enlisted against the class from which previous Foreign Ministers of Britain had exclusively sprung. We read that his earliest exploit was to head a school revolt against the "gentry" who came to hear the children repeat the Catechism and the Creed of a faith which was alien to their Non-conformity.[1] He was educated at the feet of those fiery Welsh preachers who are called upon to act their sermons, and whose words are of very slight importance compared to the general effect of their delivery.[2] He has himself pronounced many such addresses in his native language.

His youth was spent in poverty; only by the gallant and artless "cramming" of his uncle, and his own diligent exertions, did he master enough of the French language to pass, in his fourteenth year, a Preliminary Law Examination. Two years later, in 1879, he was articled to a Welsh firm of solicitors. He soon showed a keen interest in local politics, and was elected member for Carnarvon Boroughs in 1890, as a Gladstonian Liberal. His early triumphs were all connected with Wales. He was a protagonist of the "Cymru Fydd" or Welsh National movement; and when he reached Westminster his chief concern was to promote Home Rule for Wales, and to support his leaders' campaign for the Disestablishment of the Anglican Church there. In 1894, when the Liberals were again in power, we find him leading a "strike for Wales" against his own Party.

So far his attention had been almost exclusively confined to Wales. During the years of Liberal opposition between 1895 and 1905, however, he began to take an interest in the affairs of the United Kingdom. When the South African War came, his sympathies were with the Boers, and he freely and fearlessly

criticised the Conservative Government's policy. He seems to have begun to realise the imperial aspect of Britain in 1907, when, as a member of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Government, he had to attend the Conference of Dominion Ministers. He became an Imperialist; and four years later he made his first pronouncement on Foreign Affairs, which has been quoted in the chapter on the Agadir crisis. But it was a fleeting excursion into Foreign Policy; he was still absorbed in domestic questions—Old Age Pensions, Insurance, Free Trade, Ireland and the House of Lords.

The Great European War reduced to abeyance these domestic issues; and Mr Lloyd-George threw himself with the whole of his dynamic vigour into its successful prosecution. This is not the place to detail the great services which he then rendered to the British Empire and to the Allies. He was called by the country to put himself at its head. He became its spokesman to the world, and showed a brilliant capacity for translating its resolution into action. At the close of hostilities he found himself in a position of unparalleled popularity. The great war-leader was entrusted with the task of restoring stability and prosperity to Britain after the enervating struggle of those four devastating years: not Britain only; for as Britain's leader he was called upon to play a principal part in the reconstitution of war-shattered Europe: and not Europe only; the Americas, North, Central, and South, had become involved, some more and some less; Japan, China, and Siam had been belligerents; countries small and great, new and old, met to deliberate; Greece, Siberia, Poland, and Peru were among the signatories of a Peace which affected the welfare of almost all inhabitants of the civilised world; and which owed much of its final shape to the influence of the principal British Delegate. The performance of Lord Beaconsfield, the Jewish venturer, who climbed from obscurity to direct the policy of Europe at Berlin in 1878, is pale candlelight beside the dazzling feat of the self-educated

Welsh villager who rose to guide the reconstitution of the world.

2.

Mr Lloyd-George would hardly deny that he owed the importance of his position at Paris to the sacrifices and achievements which had been the British Empire's contribution to the Allied victory. But he was, to an extraordinary extent, representative of post-war Britain. His personality is baffling in its variegation. No man's mind can ever have contained in one compass such a multiplicity of views. There is hardly one of us who has not had the sensation at one moment, or in one matter, that Mr Lloyd-George, and Mr Lloyd-George alone, has exactly understood and represented our feelings. He has appeared to possess invisible filaments reaching everywhere, telepathetically conveying to his hypersensitive brain the sentiments of others. No one has ever been so readily conformable to outside influence and to environment. He is the Proteus of politics and seems to be capable of assuming any political complexion. He defies classification, for he is ever-changing. He has been a red-hot Radical, a Conservative, and more than once the servant of the Labour party; he is a Free Trader and has passed Protectionist measures; he has been a demagogue in the country and an autocrat in the Cabinet. He is perpetually adjustable to pressure. Such a personality is as elusive as the Old Man of the Sea, and sometimes appears politically indestructible; for, before the arm of criticism raised to strike has delivered its blow, behold! the man has changed his shape, and conforms perfectly to the critic's fancy.

He might have taken Mr Arnold Bennett's dictum, "The present is just as important as the future," for his motto; and he seems not only to forget, but to dissociate himself completely from, his own previous declarations. He is without persistent convictions; he looks neither forward nor back; he lives in the present and for the moment. To the ordinary Englishman he

appears now heroic, now Mephistophelean; and his foreign policy has been nondescript.

Without persistent convictions — and even therein representative of his country; for England after the war was unsettled, unnerved, demoralised. The cataclysm of 1914 had exploded old beliefs, and nothing had been put in their place. The narrower compass of views in Victorian days, so easy for Lord Salisbury to gauge and to represent, so readily submissive to authority, had made way for general exhaustion, besetting doubts, unrest, scepticism, purposeless revolt. It was a condition which most required statesmanship, and which least tended to produce it. Men had broken with the past. They rebelled against authority, resented advice, and yet could see clearly for themselves no road forward. They needed most desperately a guide. They thought they had found him in Mr Lloyd-George, and gave him unqualified authority at the general elections at the close of the war. But they had not; for he was a representative, not a leader. He reproduced the doubts, the contradictions, and the perplexities of their own minds. During the war Britain had had but one mind—to win the war. Mr Lloyd-George gave expression to that determination. He had seemed a voice; he was really only a mouthpiece. When the country, like a strong man reduced by over-exertion to neurosis, needed firm handling and a strong lead, it found a physician who could do nothing better than to humour every whim. Mr Lloyd-George did not show the statesman's talent for distinguishing the episodic from the permanent. He has shown brilliant agility in translating the nation's mood of the moment into action; but that is hardly statesmanship.

It is certainly not the statesmanship that is needed for the conduct of foreign policy. When Sir Edward Grey was first appointed Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Bishop Mandell Creighton, a distinguished historian and a friend of the family, wrote to Lady Grey: "Politics really consist in foreign politics. In internal matters Parliament can only register popular

demands. . . . But in Foreign Affairs . . . problems are set and have to be solved by wisdom . . . the whole artificial basis of English life depends on English foreign relationships." To guide, to educate, not merely to follow public opinion, is one of the duties of the Foreign Secretary, or whoever has made himself responsible for foreign policy. Mr Lloyd George renounced an established maxim of statesmanship when he once exclaimed to a Liberal deputation: "The Government cannot act in advance of public opinion." In domestic matters the nation may, possibly, be able satisfactorily to prompt its leaders; in foreign affairs Mr Lloyd George has sought to shift his responsibilities on to the shoulders of a necessarily ill-informed public, as in his dealings with Bolshevist Russia; in other cases, as in German reparation and the punishment of the Kaiser, he has himself perceived the proper course, but yielded to clamour. He has been like the captain of a cricket team who disposed his fieldsmen or changed his bowlers according to advice shouted by the crowd.

3.

Yet there is one good result, we believe, which has sprung from the direction of our policy by a democrat who was neither deeply read in the history of diplomacy nor versed in its practice. He has stimulated general interest. He has spoken to the public in their own language about foreign affairs. When he exclaimed in the House of Commons that "he did not mind saying he had never heard of Teschen," the possession of which place was threatening the peace between two European countries, he was using words which might have come from the lips of anyone, and made an undefined appeal for sympathy and support. And he has deliberately brought more openness to the conduct of diplomacy.

To approve its democratisation may seem paradoxical after the criticisms which have been passed upon

his methods. But the contradiction is surely more apparent than real. To possess a responsible Foreign Secretary who should himself be well-informed would be gain to the country; but it is very desirable that he should take the country more into his confidence, and explain the general aim of his policy more clearly and more frequently than has been the habit of our past Foreign Secretaries. The second Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Alliance, for instance, was signed during the last days of a moribund Parliament, after no sort of public discussion either by Parliament or the Press; the publicity in which the question of its renewal was debated in 1921 showed the interest and the tenor of public opinion, and thus strengthened the hands of our diplomacy. Mr Lloyd-George has directly encouraged such publicity. In May 1921, the situation in Upper Silesia was very menacing. The hope of acquiring an industrial area which was to be submitted to a plebiscite had inflamed the feelings of the rival claimants, Polish and German; not only had they come to blows, but there had been an affray between the Germans and the French troops who were there as part of the Allied contingent of supervision. The French sympathised openly with the Poles; the British authorities, while trying to maintain an impartial attitude, inclined rather to the German point of view; and the situation was very delicate. Distorted versions of the British Government's attitude appeared in the French Press. Parliament being at the moment in Easter recess, the Prime Minister took the step of publishing a long statement of Britain's attitude in the Press. He explained to the British, as also to the French public, the difficulties of the situation, and how he proposed to meet them. Such procedure was well calculated to rouse discriminating support for his policy; and was a wide departure from pre-war methods. Even Lord Grey had little belief in fostering public interest. It did not, for instance, appear to him necessary to inform the country that he had authorised discussions between the French and British naval and military

Staffs from 1906 to 1912. Secret treaties, however, were never favoured by British statesmen; and we do not criticise Lord Grey for those which he contracted during war time. But he initialed two secret agreements before August 1914[3]—both with Germany—and believed to cover the presumptive disposal of Portuguese colonies and the terminus of the Bagdad Railway. Lord Lansdowne signed a secret subsidiary Convention with France[4] in regard to Morocco simultaneously with the publication of the Entente Cordiale in 1904, and at an earlier period the Foreign Office signed two secret agreements with Italy on the subject of Abyssinia in 1891, which were published only in 1894.[5] But these commitments to which Britain was led blindfold were mere trifles compared with the compacts of Continental diplomacy. King Carol of Roumania bound his country to Austria on his own responsibility, even Cabinet Ministers being kept in ignorance of the treaty. The Austro-German Treaty of Alliance was signed in 1879, and only divulged in 1888—and then merely because Bismarck found its publication a handy weapon against his political opponents. The Treaty of Triple Alliance, whereby Italy joined the two Central Empires, was signed so secretively in 1882 that its existence remained absolutely unsuspected for over a year. When its signature became known, and even when it was openly renewed in 1891, no information as to the obligations which it carried was vouchsafed to the publics concerned. Nor were friendly governments necessarily apprised of the nature of these clandestine arrangements. Sir Edward Grey, in his speech in the House of Commons on 3rd August 1914, admitted that he was ignorant of the terms which bound France to Rùssia. The Franco-Russian "diplomatic accord" of 1891 was only announced six years later; and then the all-important military Conventions of 1892 and 1893 were not divulged. The Continental practice of binding nations by pledges, the nature of which was entirely unknown to them, has, we may hope, found its euthanasia in the Covenant

of the League of Nations. The British Prime Minister, at any rate, has consistently striven for publicity in Foreign Affairs. He instituted special arrangements at the Paris Congress, and at all subsequent meetings, for the provision of trustworthy news to representatives of the Press. At the close of every sitting it has been the function of Lord Riddell to give the assembled journalists an official summary of the proceedings. Much, no doubt, remains untold; but the arrangement makes it possible for every intelligent pressman to obtain a very shrewd idea of how negotiations are proceeding, and to convey the information to the world. Mr Lloyd-George has, perhaps, carried the system too far. On the occasion of one of the post-war Conferences in Paris, the author, together with other British and American journalists, was invited to a dinner party by Lord Riddell, at which it was announced the Prime Minister would be present. Mr Lloyd-George duly appeared, rather late, having refreshed himself elsewhere, for the express purpose, we were informed, of answering any questions which we liked to address to him. The Conference was not ended; so negotiations with the French Government were still proceeding. The knowledge of this fact did not prevent some of the American journalists present from asking leading questions. "Mr Prime Minister," queried one, "are you on good terms with M. Briand?" (then French Prime Minister). Other enquiries, more insinuating and more indiscreet, were freely put, and ambiguously assented to, or cleverly evaded, by Mr Lloyd-George. The performance resolved itself into a duel of wits, in which the questioners thrust and the questioned parried. Some of the answers certainly illuminated or explained; others, when the information demanded was on a delicate subject, obtained, and could only obtain, an insincere or misleading reply. A meeting between negotiators and journalists is certainly much appreciated by the latter, and may perhaps be of mutual advantage. But it should be of a frankly social nature, wherein acquaintance may be made, the personal

element gauged, and mutual confidence established. For the Minister to pretend to answer questions which cannot properly be answered at the time, is to promote insincerity and prevarication, and to revive the odium into which diplomacy had fallen with the public, and which its democratisation is calculated to dispel.

# CHAPTER II

## PARIS CONGRESS, 1919

"Natura infirmitatis humanæ tardiora sunt remedia quam mala; et ut corpora nostra lente augescunt, cito extinguuntur, sic ingenia studiaque oppresseris facilius quam revocaveris." TACITUS, *Agricola.*

*Translation.*—"The nature of human weakness is such that remedies operate more slowly than ills; as our bodies mature gradually and are suddenly extinguished, so you will more easily suppress intellectual pursuits than call them back."

### 1.

It would fill many volumes to record in detail the results of the world-war which nominally ended on 11th November 1918. They extended to every Continent and to neutral States as well as to the belligerents. Its economic repercussions have affected almost every individual survivor in the civilised world. A few considerations which would be uppermost in the minds of British delegates proceeding to Paris for the peace negotiations are summarised here:—

1. The German navy had practically ceased to exist.

2. Germany's mercantile marine had been destroyed or immobilised, and could, like her fleet, be eliminated as a rival to Britain's.

3. Germany's oversea possessions had fallen into the hands of the Allies.

4. The United States' power had been enormously augmented. Their exertions had been within the compass of their normal strength. They, and to a lesser extent Japan, had increased in wealth and influence during a war which had exhausted the other combatants, vanquished and victorious.

5. Continental Europe was in desperate straits, economic and political. No peace could be real which did not restore or tend to restore economic stability, and allay or help to allay racial passions aroused during the war. The principal hatred which would be a stumbling-block to the work of conciliation was that between Germany and France.

6. Democracy had triumphed over autocracy, and nationality over oligarchy. The absolute rule of the Emperors of Germany and Austria-Hungary, of the Sultan of Turkey, of the Tsar of Bulgaria, had been destroyed; the innumerable minor potentates of Germany had disappeared. In Greece a new boy-king took his orders from his Prime Minister, as was also the case in Bulgaria, and to a lesser extent in the extended State of Yugo-Slavia. In fact, if not in form, kingship also underwent at least a temporary eclipse in Italy.

The races of the Hapsburg monarchy, previously exploited by an Austro-Hungarian oligarchy, were freed. Poles were liberated from subjugation to Austria, Russia, and Germany, and had already constituted themselves into an independent State. When the Paris Congress assembled, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and Yugo-Slavia had already existed as free States for three months. This is important to remember, as it is often loosely said that the Treaty of Versailles "created" these States. The treaty ratified their independence, of which they could certainly have only been deprived by force.

Europe had been the chief theatre of the war. Its misery was without parallel in modern history. After the havoc of the Thirty Years' War part of the Germanic Empire was reduced to sombre destitution; but the area was comparatively restricted. And Napoleon I.'s "continental blockade," incremented by Britain's retaliatory measures, had not succeeded in starving Europe with the same effectiveness as had the Allied fleets between 1914 and 1918; for Europe had been transformed by industrialisation

during the intervening century; it had been linked to the vast spaces of the New World by steamship and become dependent upon them for its food. Central Europe had suddenly had these supplies cut off; it had been besieged by the Allies for four and a half years; in 1919 the calculation was made that it contained, despite its casualties, 100,000,000 more inhabitants than it was capable of supporting.[1] And many other of the necessaries of life had ceased to reach it—wool, cotton, rubber, oil, jute, phosphates, without which men can neither clothe themselves, transport their wares, nor fertilise their fields. Economic anarchy was universal. Some 10,000,000 of its workers had perished by violence or disease. Nor was the diminution of manual labour the chief obstacle to reconstruction. Those experienced in government and administration had been dispersed or submerged; in many countries, notably throughout the former Hapsburg Dominions, Revolution had swept the old officials from their places and superseded them with untried men. It is the curse of violent change that the submerged talent which should gradually find its way to the high administrative posts is suddenly flung into positions of far-reaching responsibility, where decisions taken without knowledge and without experience make or mar the happiness of millions. Vast and complicated problems of statecraft faced these beginners in politics; schoolmasters, doctors, and journalists found themselves Prime Ministers. The whirl of events drove some professors to earn their living as porters and carried another to the Presidency of a European State. Men of political experience were living in idleness or exile, while Governments looked in vain for adequate talent to fill the most ordinary diplomatic or other official posts.

In many areas spasmodic fighting still occurred. A revolution in Russia, more chimerical in its aims and more sanguinary in its methods than any other, spread chaos into neighbouring lands; and derelict

German armies were fighting now for and now against the border States of non-Slav origin which had formed themselves along the Baltic fringe of the former Tsar's dominions. The truculent Hungarians were in a state of seething indignation against the amputation of their ancient domains which the Armistice had sanctioned, and they made onslaughts against Czechs and Roumanians while the peace negotiations were in progress. The negotiators of the victorious countries took in hand an unenviable business when they attempted to establish a definite peace at Paris within a few months of the close of hostilities. The war spirit could not subside instantaneously; and Paris was the very core of anti-German sentiment. Place and time accorded ill with their genuine desire to build peace upon a basis of justice and equity. Human nature demanded that some concession should be made to the spirit of victory, and Paris was, no doubt, the proper place from which to dictate the armistice terms to the vanquished, and to settle the preliminaries of peace. But it might have been the wiser course then to discuss the final terms with the conquered at another place and with cooler deliberation, on the agreed basis of the preliminaries. To sign the peace at Versailles was to carry on the tradition of the triumphant debasement of an ancient enemy, a tradition which it was the avowed object of all to eradicate. None could challenge the claim of France to have the preliminaries signed in a hall where alone Germany's arrogant triumph of half a century before could be counterpoised; but to sign a final peace in the Galerie des Glaces in the unsubsided glow of war-passion was to help to perpetuate the principal of all European rivalries, the mainspring of unrest in Western Europe.

## 2.

Mr Lloyd-George employed the time which intervened between the close of hostilities and the meeting of the Peace Congress to hold a general election,

which confirmed him in power with an overwhelming majority. He could claim to represent Britain with fuller credentials than Lord Beaconsfield at Berlin, for he was head of a Coalition Government which included representatives of all parties. He arrived in Paris on 11th January 1919, and took up his residence in a flat in the Rue Nitot. He found already assembled in the French Capital delegates from all the twenty-seven allied belligerent countries,[2] from the new Republics which the collapse of Austria and Russia had enfranchised, from Poland and Haiti, from Greece and the Hejaz; Ruthenians, Syrians, and Lebanese, and countless mushroom States which an over-sanguine interpretation of the fashionable theory of "self-determination" had called into existence. Even Korea attempted to send delegates, but they, starting from their distant Capital on 5th February and travelling chiefly on foot, only reached Archangel in July and Paris in December, then to find that the Congress had concluded its labours.[3] The whole assembly was presided over by M. Clemenceau, the veteran French Premier; Mr Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, was the only Chief of State who attended. Most countries were represented by their Premiers or Foreign Ministers, or both. Marshal Foch and distinguished representatives of the chief Allied armies were there. Each delegation contained several professional diplomatists, and a large number of experts, many of whom, however, did not profess a serious claim to that title.[4]

During the first stage of the Congress the chief negotiations were conducted by a Council of the ten leading Powers — France, Britain, America, Italy, Japan, and five lesser nations. But the representatives of these latter and of Japan soon dropped out, and the discussions were carried on by the "Big Four," as they came to be called—M. Clemenceau, Mr Lloyd-George, President Wilson, and Signor Orlando, the Italian Prime Minister. The innumerable subsidiary questions were relegated to Com-

missions — which sat independently to discuss such matters as Responsibility for the War, the League of Nations, Reparation, International Labour, Finance, Commerce, Aeronautics, Territorial Boundaries. These Commissions reported, as required, to the Supreme Council. Two subsidiary Supreme Councils were also formed—the Supreme War Council and the Supreme Economic Council.

A notable muster was that of the British Empire's delegates. Each Dominion sent its Premier, and India was represented by the British Secretary of State, Mr Montagu, supported by two distinguished Indians, Lord Sinha and the Maharaja of Bikanir. The status of the Dominion representatives caused a difficulty at the outset. Britain, during the war, had learned to regard them as sister nations, but they were not so considered by the world. Immediately on his arrival in Paris Mr Lloyd-George insisted upon better representation for them than had been contemplated; their status was not defined; but in principle he carried his point, and at the close of the negotiations the representatives of Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and India, separately signed the peace-treaties. Mr Lloyd-George's courageous stand earned the warm gratitude of the Imperial representatives, and gave a new importance to the British Commonwealth of nations in the Councils of the world. It was all the more courageous in that its implied consequences did not commend themselves to the American Delegation, with whom Mr Lloyd-George was determined to remain in the closest possible concord. His achievement would have been still more notable, and have earned him the hall-mark of statesmanship, if he had proceeded, either then or since, to define, even approximately, the relative position and functions of the Dominions in shaping Imperial foreign policy. If the Empire is to continue, Britain must frankly face the question whether we are to have one foreign policy or six.

The atmosphere of Paris is not conducive to calm thought or long views, and it soon became more

impregnated than usual with intrigue. Mr Lloyd-George came to the Congress with the established name of a liberator, a fighter for the down-trodden. It had spread to the Continent in the days of his Radical activities in Britain; and the reputation was naturally enhanced by his position as head of one of the great liberating nations of the war; whose popularity, moreover, had been wonderfully spread in Europe wherever British arms had reached. On the heels of beaten Bulgars, Austrians, and Germans, British troops had penetrated to Roumania, to Hungary, Austria and the Baltic States, and isolated Staffs and their following had arrived even at inland Capitals like Prague. Everywhere the simple, manly, upright conduct of Thomas Atkins had done such propaganda as no pamphleteers, however skilful, and no political advocates could have achieved. Britain was regarded as Europe's best friend. To an Englishman travelling in Europe in the months after the armistice the eager trust with which its minor nations looked to us was very moving. Of the victorious countries, France was deemed willing, but too exhausted, to help; America able, but too remote; Britain alone willing, able, and near at hand. His best friends hoped that Mr Lloyd-George would leave the political re-arrangement of Europe to the diplomatic experts, and devote his chief energies to the establishment of a League of Nations, whose covenant should embody the ideals of political liberty which the trial of arms had vindicated. That, and the restoration of economic life, were the two most immediate needs of Europe. And their satisfaction would accord with Britain's permanent interests. "Britain's foreign policy," Sir Edward Grey once said, "may be summed up in a word—conciliation" (5th May 1909); and we depend for full commercial prosperity upon active trade with Europe. To promote these two prime objects should have been the task of the British Premier; the diplomatic work he might have left with security in the hands of Mr A. J. Balfour and Lord

Hardinge of Penshurst, who were both in attendance. Mr Lloyd-George had been in his younger days something of a prophet; the vitalising of the League of Nations was a task which he better than any one else might have undertaken with hope of success. But he left the role of Europe's political high-priest to President Wilson, and plunged into the business of diplomatic bargaining — new to him, attractive by reason of its novelty, soon, apparently, made congenial by his surprising adaptability.

Like Cardinal Wolsey, in his first experience of Continental diplomacy at Mechlin,[5] he found that there was "so much inconstancy, mutability, and little regard of promises and causes, that in their appointments there is little trust or surety; for things surely determined to be done one day are changed or altered the next." The great Tudor envoy had been rather nonplussed; not so Mr Lloyd-George. He became an enthusiastic diplomatist. He set himself to outwit the most practised intriguers; and was soon master among adepts. He disclosed an astonishing aptitude for diplomatic legerdemain. His quick intuition into another's standpoint, the winning persuasiveness with which he drew him away from it; his own flexibility; the note of sternness which he knew how to strike at the psychological minute; his absolute freedom from any known propendency; his easy, quick assumption of the attitude best suited to the occasion, an attitude expressed not only by word or gesture, but by his whole being—for acting, with him as with Lord Chatham, has become second nature—all these attributes concurred to make him, at Paris and the subsequent Conferences, a brilliant and formidable negotiator. But, unfortunately, they were not steadied by moral ballast. The American Secretary of State attending the Congress, Mr Lansing, writes of him: "He did not accept a principle, or at least showed no disposition to apply it, unless it appeared to lead to some practical advantage to his Government, and if he found that his anticipation as to the

result was wrong he unhesitatingly abandoned the principle and assumed another." Again he writes: "If it were shown that his argument was based on false premises he unblushingly changed his premises, but not his argument . . . he, in my opinion, had the quickest mind of the Big Four, but it seemed to lack stability. One might even feel a measure of contemptuous surprise that he dared to discuss a question of territory without knowing exactly where the territory was."[6] That such words should be penned by the representative of a friendly State, and should pass unchallenged, greatly impairs the value of the brilliant Welsh Prime Minister's diplomatic work. Mr Lloyd-George's methods were a derogation from British standards, and approximated to those of pre-war Continental diplomacy. Such a derogation, which would not have been difficult to justify in war time, when moral values are changed, and killing is accounted to virtue, was particularly unfortunate when the world was looking eagerly to the United Kingdom, and when British ideas had a better chance of finding ready acceptance on the Continent than at any previous time in our history. Instead, the world saw us filch advantages without too nice a regard for national honour.

An example soon occurred. Britain had come to the Congress pledged not to exact an indemnity from Germany, but demanding only that compensation should be "made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air." But, in those election addresses which had carried him to renewed power in England, the Prime Minister had used phrases which let the public understand that much more than the recovery of damages was to be claimed from Germany. "We propose to demand the whole cost of the war from Germany," he told them at Bristol on 11th December; and at an overflow meeting he added, "We shall search their pockets for it."

When the question of reparation came before the Congress, it was obvious that the claim of the British Empire, on a strict interpretation of its pledge, would be indeed a small one. Devastation of British civilian property was insignificant, compared with that inflicted upon France, Belgium, Serbia, Roumania, and Poland. Mr Lloyd-George decided, therefore, to include the item of war pensions under the head of damage to the civilian population, and for France as well as for Britain. He argued with insidious plausibility: "You mean to say that France is to be compensated for the loss of a chimney-pot in the devastated district, but not for the loss of a life?" and General Smuts, of South Africa, was commissioned to prepare a memorandum on the subject according to which pensions for disabled soldiers were recoverable because the soldiers were civilians before they enlisted and became civilians again after their discharge.[7] He carried his point; but the cleverness of the arguing could not remove the imputation of bad faith; and it somewhat lowered the value of Britain's subsequent professions.

## 3.

This is not a history of the Peace Conference; but for the sake of following Mr Lloyd-George's policy it becomes necessary to specify some of the conditions by which the British delegates were tied before they came to Paris. Germany, when she could fight no longer, had chosen to approach the Government of the United States; and the basis on which peace negotiations could be entered into by the Allies was settled between Germany and President Wilson, supported by the Allied Governments. As a result the Allies on 5th November declared their willingness to make peace on the terms laid down by President Wilson in his address to Congress on 8th January 1918, and "the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses." The only reserves they made, at the instigation of the British Government, were

complete liberty as to interpretation of the phrase "freedom of navigation upon the seas"; and the stipulation that civilian populations should be compensated for damage (as already recorded). President Wilson's "Fourteen Points" of 8th January 1918 may be briefly summarised as stipulating that all invaded territories should be evacuated, that Alsace-Lorraine should be restored to France, that a "general association of nations" should be formed, that national armaments should be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety, and that "open covenants of peace should be openly arrived at, after which there should be no private international understandings of any kind." The President's "subsequent addresses" stipulated that "people and provinces were not to be bartered about . . . as if they were chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now for ever discredited, of the Balance of Power": territorial settlements were to be for the benefit of the populations concerned: there were to be no "annexations or punitive damages": he made a declaration against the use of economic boycotts, except as authorised by the League of Nations: and finally, recalling Washington's famous warning against "entangling alliances," he said, "we recognise and accept the duty of a new day," and hailed the advent of the moment when common understandings could be formed which should comprehend the whole world: "national purposes have fallen more and more into the background, and the common purpose of enlightened mankind has taken their place." President Wilson was unacquainted with Europe; and his aspirations left entirely out of account the ancient animosities and liberated nationalism of its various races; these were to be most prominently exemplified and championed by France.

One further point made by Mr Wilson in the preliminary negotiations must be mentioned. He referred to the internal constitution of Germany: he pointed out that that country did not possess a "Government responsible to the German people": he

specifically named the "King of Prussia's unimpaired power to control the policy of the Empire." The German people took the hint, and ridded themselves of the King of Prussia—in the not unnatural, but nevertheless unfortunate, expectation that they would thereby obtain more favourable consideration.

Now the British Prime Minister's undertakings to his people, in regard both to reparation and the treatment to be accorded to the Kaiser, whose trial, together with other "war criminals," was demanded by the public and promised by him, were not easy to reconcile with Mr Wilson's attitude: far less easy to reconcile with it was M. Clemenceau's point of view. "National purposes" had not "fallen into the background" for France; she desired a territorial settlement which primarily should ensure her safety from invasion; she had no intention of abandoning her right to have "private international understandings."

Both France and Britain, moreover, were bound by a whole series of war-time agreements from which America was free. In addition to the Treaties with Italy and Roumania to whom, in return for their participation, definite territorial promises had been made, various private understandings still retained validity for the nations which, among other objects, had been fighting to maintain the sanctity of international agreements. In April 1917, at St Jean de Maurienne, "spheres of influence" in Asia Minor had been arranged between Italy, France, and Britain: in February of that year the above Powers and Russia had promised Japan to support her claim to Kiaochow, and for the reversion of German rights in Shantung: earlier yet, Russia had secured the assent of Britain and France to her possession of Constantinople—a promise which, in this case, was clearly invalidated, if not by the disappearance of the entire régime with whom the agreement had been signed, at any rate by Russia's repudiation at Brest-Litovsk of her undertaking not to make a separate peace. In the arrangements which were still binding many of the

territorial clauses were frankly based upon strategical considerations, notably in the Italian treaty; in the Asiatic agreements the word "compensation" frequently occurs; and the phrase "balance of power" is mentioned with approval. Britain and France therefore cherished, before Europe, principles which they agreed, with America, to regard as "for ever discredited." Their task in Paris was to reconcile the incompatible, to blend the "old diplomacy" of Europe with the "new diplomacy" of America. On Mr Lloyd-George rested the further complication of reconciling his fiery anti-German utterances in England with the wise policy of mitigation which his cooler reflection suggested, and which he in fact adopted. No other individual in the world, we suppose, would with composure, and even cheerfulness, have attempted to combine in his own person the characters of a chauvinistic electioneer and a conciliatory negotiator, of a bargaining intriguer and an advocate of open diplomacy.

President Wilson unambiguously championed the methods of the new world; M. Clemenceau unambiguously those of the old; and in practice Mr Lloyd-George's task resolved itself into effecting compromises between these representatives of different hemispheres.

A typical conflict arose over the settlement of the new Franco-German frontier. Alsace-Lorraine presented no difficulties; its transfer to France was a restitution, not an annexation. But France was not satisfied. Many Frenchmen regard the Rhine as the only "natural frontier" on the north-east; and the demand was put forward that the river should be made the western boundary of Germany, and that the German provinces on its left bank should form a buffer State, and be under the military and political control of France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and even Britain. Its occupation by forces of these countries was to be permanent, from the Dutch frontier to Alsace.[8] M. Clemenceau, significantly supported by Marshal Foch, advanced elaborate arguments, based on strategic considerations. Before 1914 France could count on

Russia's army holding up a great part of a German onslaught, and this counterweight no longer existed: new Russia might become an ally of Germany: no neutral zone, no demilitarisation, no written agreements could prevent Germany from seizing the Rhine and using it as an advantageous starting-point for an offensive: no help from Britain or America, however promptly despatched, could save France from defeat or the necessity of withdrawing her forces behind the Somme or the Seine or the Loire. Mr Lloyd-George joined President Wilson in making a firm stand against this thesis, which would virtually bring under French rule 5,400,000 Germans, and thus create a new rankling sore between France and Germany, like that of Alsace-Lorraine, except that the grievance would be Germany's instead of France's. He finally overbore Foch and Clemenceau only by the promise, to which President Wilson adhered, that Britain and America would bring armed help to France in the case of unprovoked aggression by Germany. The promise was embodied in a Treaty which was signed on 29th June 1919, but which was dependent upon ratification by the British and American Parliaments. This ratification the American Senate refused; and the Treaty thus lapsed. It imposes upon us, however, an obligation which can only properly be met by renewing our offer of alliance to France. It is unfortunate that a pledge on so important a matter should have been given by Mr Lloyd-George in the course of diplomatic bargaining. A perpetual peace-time alliance with France would be an unprecedented event in British history; and the claim of France was, in spirit if not in wording, so gross a violation of the Wilsonian principles, to which she had herself subscribed, that our negotiators, one thinks, should have been able to refuse it without giving a particular pledge of support which is collectively guaranteed by the League of Nations.

Moreover, France's original demand was so far conceded that temporary occupation of the buffer State territory was ordained in the final Treaty. According

to its terms the whole area, with bridgeheads on the east bank of the Rhine, was to be occupied for five years. At the end of that period the northern portion (that is the Cologne area northward) was to be evacuated: after ten years the Coblentz bridgehead and a further slice of territory west of the Rhine to be handed back to Germany: and after fifteen the Mainz (southernmost) bridgehead and remaining territory must be restored: the right to delay evacuation, however, is reserved if Germany has not observed her Treaty obligations.

In accordance with his avowed intention—avowed in the Congress, that is to say—of negotiating peace as though he were "an impartial arbiter, forgetful of the passions of the war,"[9] Mr Lloyd-George found himself once more in opposition to France and in support of Germany in the matter of the latter's eastern frontier. The establishment of an independent Poland had as corollary a claim, which was hotly supported by France, that she should be granted a strip of land running northward to the sea at Danzig. A committee of experts recommended that the eastern frontiers of Germany should be so drawn as to leave to Poland the city of Danzig and a corridor to it from Poland proper. Mr Lloyd-George opposed the experts' report, chiefly on the ground that it would leave 2,100,000 Germans in Poland, and that Danzig itself was a purely German town. Mr Lloyd-George's views were supported by Mr Wilson, and finally prevailed. Danzig was constituted a Free City under the League of Nations, and the mixed districts of Marienwerder and Allenstein on the east of the corridor were left to decide by plebiscite to which country they would belong. Both districts elected in 1920 by overwhelming majorities to join Germany. Mr Lloyd-George's policy was thus vindicated. It is possible that he would rather not have suffered the territorial severance of East Prussia from the rest of Germany, as was settled in the final terms; but in the heat of post-war passions no settlement more favourable to Germany could probably have been secured.

Yet another intervention on Germany's side was made by Mr Lloyd-George after the Treaty had been presented to the Germans for their consideration and comment. He conceded their claim that a plebiscite should be held in Upper Silesia. He was determined to leave as few points of friction as possible in the boundaries of new Europe.

4.

While these diplomatic bargains were being negotiated, the Commission appointed for the purpose was rapidly elaborating a covenant for the new league of nations; for President Wilson announced that he would not sign a peace without such a covenant attached. American diplomacy may thus claim the chief credit for the definite establishment of the League; the actual form which it assumed was largely the work of Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts, the British members of the Commission. The League Covenant was appended to every treaty of peace signed with an enemy belligerent; it has therefore become part of the policy of the world; and has now been joined by fifty-one States. This number, however, in spite of its parentage, does not include America, whose Senate has rejected both it and the Treaty of Versailles; nor, despite the desire of Mr Lloyd-George expressed in the Circular Memorandum which he issued to his fellow-negotiators in Paris, has Germany yet been admitted, nor Russia, nor Turkey.

Its main provisions, which are summarised in the concluding chapter, provided a system of mandates for the Colonial possessions which Germany lost in the war. On this point Mr Lloyd-George had to oppose the wishes of the British Dominions themselves. When the disposal of the conquered territories was discussed Australia and South Africa, as also Japan, desired their outright annexation. To this the British Prime Minister demurred; and peoples who were judged to be "not yet able to stand by themselves

under the strenuous conditions of the modern world," were given in trust to the States whose claims to administer them were based upon proximity or conquest, and the possession of a superior civilisation. They were required to render an annual account of their stewardship to the League itself. The principle of government for the benefit of the governed, on which the British Empire has ever relied since it lost the American colonies, was thus embodied in treaty form and acquired world-wide application.

In one other matter the British Prime Minister prominently allied himself with President Wilson. Through the intermediary of an American journalist, by name Mr Bullitt, communications were established with the communistic fanatics who were at that time trying to make themselves masters of Russia. In the first month of the Congress an invitation was made to the Soviet Government to send representatives to the island of Prinkipo, in the Sea of Marmara, in order to confer with the Allied and Associated Powers as to the best means of establishing "happy co-operative relations" between her people and the other peoples of the world. Representatives of each of the various rival Russian groups, political or military, were invited; the condition being attached, however, that there should be "a truce of arms among the parties invited," and that "all armed forces anywhere directed against any people or territory outside the boundaries of European Russia should be withdrawn." To issue such an invitation and suggest such conditions was to invest Sovietism with the then still fictitious character of an effective government; and to suppose that terrorists, and their intended victims, could sit down amicably round the same table. Lenin and Trotzky were at that period only leaders of the most powerful party in Russia; their authority depended chiefly upon mercenary bayonets; they had no constitutional status; and Britain and France were actually giving armed support to anti-Bolshevik leaders in North and South Russia. Bolshevism, which has brought untold miseries

upon Russia and the world, could very probably have been crushed, before it had driven its tentacles into the inert Slav mass, by stern united action on the part of the Allies. Mr Lloyd-George, supporting the academic proposal of Mr Wilson, presupposed a Russian Government able to ensure the execution of its decrees. Even if the Central Soviet had agreed to the Allied proposal it could not have stopped the fighting of scattered bands, masquerading as armies, which were sniping and pillaging, inside Russia and out of it, foreigners and compatriots promiscuously. We had not won the war in Russia, and war methods alone were still applicable to the Russian problem. The Prinkipo proposal was flouted by the Bolsheviks. The French and American Governments learned their lesson, and refused to have further dealings with a military dictatorship which contradicted the principles for which the Allies had fought and which they were still striving to establish firmly in Europe. The rebuff did not prevent Mr Lloyd-George from continuing his attempts to admit the Soviet régime, whose leaders he stigmatised, in his Circular Memorandum, as "extremists whose only idea of regenerating mankind is to destroy utterly the whole existing fabric of society," into the circle of civilised Governments.

5.

By 7th May the terms of peace were ready for presentation to Germany. Representatives arrived from Weimar, in South Germany, whither the Government had been significantly transferred from Prussia. The terms were conveyed to them with a few short, bluff phrases from M. Clemenceau: the Allies could not allow any oral discussion; but would reply to any written observations which Germany might choose to make. They made many; and the final terms were not accepted without an ultimatum from the Allies and a change of government at Weimar. It was not difficult for the Germans to indicate discrepancies in certain of the Treaty provisions with some of the

more exuberant of Mr Wilson's aphorisms which had been taken as the basis of the negotiations; on the other hand, it was possible to reply to Germany that the international rights which she claimed were only being temporarily withheld; it was not proposed permanently to exclude her from the League of Nations, nor to erect economic barriers against her: there must be a "transition period" during which the economic balance was to be restored: Germany was to redeem her reputation. The peace, in fact, was definite in name but not in character. It was vindicated in a brilliantly composed letter which accompanied the Allied reply to the German objections. The despatch was signed by M. Clemenceau; but it is an open secret that the actual author was Mr Philip Kerr, the British Premier's private secretary. He maintained that it was a peace not of violence but of justice: it was not based upon a condonation of the events of 1914-1918: reparation for wrongs inflicted was of the essence of justice: the war had been a crime against humanity and right: Germany was responsible for that war, because for many years her rulers had "striven for a position of dominance in Europe," and attempted "to dictate and tyrannise to a subservient Europe": they sought "to sow hostility and suspicion instead of friendship between nations: they developed a system of espionage and intrigue which enabled them to stir up internal rebellion and unrest, and even to make secret offensive preparations within the territory of their neighbours whereby they might strike them down with greater certainty and ease:" the German Revolution could not be counted as absolving the German people from these crimes against humanity and right: for the Revolution had been stayed until the German armies had been defeated in the field and all hope of profiting by a war of conquest had vanished: it was impossible to expect the free nations of the world "to sit down immediately in equal association with those by whom they have been so grievously wronged."

The last-quoted sentence discloses the weak point in the armour of the Paris Congress. A peace imposed is not a peace "of equity." Its final conclusion should have coincided with the real demise of the war-spirit, and the general return of European politicians to a peace-time frame of mind. How far politicians still stood from impartial sentiments towards Germany was shown by an incident which occurred soon after Mr Lloyd-George had circularised the Congress with his conciliatory Memorandum. He disclosed its gist to journalists; and immediately on the diffusion of the information at Westminster a group of 370 members despatched a telegram to the Prime Minister, urging in the strongest terms that the financial claims of the Empire should be formulated and presented in full to Germany without consideration of Germany's capacity to pay. Lloyd-George, the diplomatist, was sharply reminded of that other Lloyd-George, the electioneer.

6.

The ceremony of the peace signature at Versailles on 28th June caused an almost delirious outburst of enthusiasm outside the famous Palace where Clemenceau dictated his terms to Bismarck's successors. He, President Wilson, and Mr Lloyd-George were slapped on the back by the eager, friendly arms of an uncontrollable multitude; kissed, cheered, and pelted with flowers. The crowd looked back, and not forward. They gave boisterous vent to indescribable relief from a nightmare which had lain heavy upon them for fifty-two tragical months. What had seemed interminable this Treaty had terminated. Analysis and criticism could wait. The war was over; peace was declared.

Whatever good or ill the Treaty might portend, it was a masterpiece of successful improvisation. Not only the major matters of territorial changes, disarmament, disposal of prisoners of war, etc., had been settled in detail; but minute directions were laid down, in its

440 articles and innumerable annexes, for regulating fraudulent competition in commercial transactions, the care of graves, the certificates of merchant vessels, the liquidation of Germans' property in different countries of the world, freedom of aerial transit of goods over Germany, the navigation of inland waterways, the opium traffic, intellectual property-rights in transferred territories, the prohibition of military exercises in German schools, the presentation by Germany to Louvain's library of books to the value of those destroyed, the restoration to the King of the Hejaz of the original Koran of the Caliph Othman, which was removed from Medina by the Turkish authorities and was "stated to have been presented to the ex-Emperor William II.," the validity of contracts, etc., etc., etc. Never, we suppose, has so polyglot a body of workers collaborated in so short a space of time to produce so amazing a variety of decisions. The Berlin Treaty of 1878 contained some 7750 words: and this total is included three times over in the analytical index alone of the Versailles Treaty.

## 7.

The limits of a chapter which have already been exceeded allow no more than an enumeration of the treaties signed by the Allies with the remaining belligerents—negotiated, on Britain's behalf, principally by Mr A. J. Balfour and Sir Eyre Crow.

LIST OF PEACE TREATIES, 1919-1921.

| Treaty of Peace | Place. | Signed. | Came into Force. |
|---|---|---|---|
| With Germany . | Versailles . . | 28th June 1919 | 10th Jan. 1920 |
| „ Austria . | Saint-Germain . | 10th Sept. 1919 | 16th July 1920 |
| „ Bulgaria . | Neuilly . . | 27th Nov. 1919 | 9th Aug. 1920 |
| „ Hungary . | Trianon . . | 4th June 1920 | 26th July 1921 |
| „ Turkey . | Sèvres . . | 10th Aug. 1920 | ... |

Peace was signed between the U.S.A. and Germany at Berlin on 25th August 1921; the U.S.A. not having been at war with Austria-Hungary, Turkey, or Bulgaria.

Nor is it possible to examine their provisions; only a few comments may be recorded on the general results by one who has visited all the European countries concerned since the conclusion of peace.

The new political boundaries, determined, for the most part, by bodies of trained diplomatists, are likely to be as enduring as the laws of national growth allow. The plebiscite system, to which resort was made in the case of indistinct ethnical divisions, has on the whole worked well, especially in regard to Germany and Denmark, whose Government showed discretion as wise as it is rare in disfavouring any large incorporation of foreign inhabitants. Special safeguards which were devised for the protection of minorities alien to the surrounding populations, and too far separated from their own nationals for union with them, impinge somewhat harshly on governmental authority, and may give rise to considerable trouble if the right of appeal to the League of Nations is resorted to by these minorities over the heads of their rulers. The "Balkanisation" of Europe is a charge freely made against the framers of the Treaties. In the above respect alone is there any justice in this accusation. The aspirations of the oppressed races, for whom, in Europe, the war was one of emancipation, and their intensely nationalistic feelings, long repressed, made no other solution feasible but that of separate sovereignty for each of the races of the old Hapsburg dominions. If Austria has been left a "rotting carcase in the European system" the blame rests not on the negotiators in Paris, but on the former ruling caste of Austria-Hungary, who bullied their subjects, and sowed a sullen desire of vengeance by denying them elementary political rights.

More justifiable is the criticism that the Treaties deny to the former enemies rights which it proclaimed as won for mankind.

The inclusion of Tyrolese in Italy, for strategical reasons; and the refusal to allow the Austrians to unite with Germany, were neither just nor politic. To increase the proportion of south Germans to north

Germans within the *Reich* would be no disadvantage to Europe; it would certainly not contribute to the military consolidation of Germany, and would undo much of Bismarck's work. In some cases, on the other hand, frontiers have been conformed so meticulously to ethnical distribution as to become unnatural. The long Thracian sea-board which has been awarded to Greece, and which cuts off the more vigorous Bulgarians from the open sea; and the unnatural amputation of Prussia in the east constitute certain problems of the future for Europe's statesmen. Treaties are worse than useless if their provisions are not maintained. In the words of Sir Edward Grey, they are the "solemn compacts upon which civilisation rests."[10] It seems a mistake, therefore, to make arrangements which, however justifiable in theory, do not conform to realities, and are almost sure to be violated. On this reasoning we must also criticise the assumed perpetuity of arrangements made for Germany by her victors in the moment of her prostration. Who is going to prevent Germany from fortifying Heligoland in twenty years' time should she so desire? Who is going to prevent her maintaining or assembling armed forces, or holding military manœuvres, within fifty kilometres of the Rhine? These provisions suppose an eternal supervision of Germany's internal affairs; a task which neither the League of Nations nor any group of nations can effectually undertake.

The Congress has also been rightly criticised for not paying sufficient attention to the economic basis on which Europe was to be built up. The Allied countries and their dependencies produced most of the goods which Europe most desperately needed in 1918. Their governments also possessed the machinery with which to deliver them. The shipping of the world was in their hands. The blockade of Central Europe had been brought to a fine art by the navies of the Western Powers and of America; and was indeed more a system of rationing than a blockade, for food had to be conveyed in different proportions to Allied

and to neutral countries. This system, without interruption, should have been diverted to constructive uses, and extended by the utilisation of the German shipping which became available. President Wilson took the lead in destroying the war-time machinery in order to substitute for it new arrangements. He held the view that "the new problems of the armistice period should be dealt with by appropriate new machinery."[11] His academic mind apparently perceived a complete difference between the state of Europe on 11th November and 12th November 1918. There was no sudden amelioration; rather, the economic conditions deteriorated for many months after the removal of the war-time organisation of supplies. Some sort of Economic Union, if it could have been established, would have been more immediately valuable than the League which was actually created. The difficulties would, without a doubt, have been immense; but if Mr Lloyd-George had devoted himself to obtaining its establishment he might have achieved the same success as President Wilson with his League of Nations. He chose, however, to turn his energies to the diplomatic business; and on the whole, whatever were his methods, he succeeded in imparting to the Versailles Treaty some of the breadth of view and tolerant spirit of the new diplomacy, without which it would have been frankly a peace of vengeance. His services were rewarded by King George with the bestowal of the Order of Merit.

One of Mr Lloyd-George's principal collaborators issued a grave manifesto immediately after its conclusion. "There are territorial settlements," said General Smuts, "which will need revision. There are guarantees laid down which we all hope will soon be found to be out of harmony with the new peaceful temper and the unarmed state of our former enemy. There are punishments foreshadowed over most of which a calmer mood may yet prefer to pass the sponge of oblivion. There are indemnities stipulated which cannot be exacted without grave injury to

ARCTIC O.
Iceland
Lofoten Is
Christiansund
Trondhjem
Sundsvall
Gulf of Bothnia
Finland
Christiansand
Stockholm
Upsala
Abo
Helsingfors
Faroe Is
Shetland
St Kilda
Orkney Is
Pentland Firth
Aberdeen
Dundee
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Belfast
Dublin
Limerick
Galway
Cork
Liverpool
Manchester
Leeds
Hull
Bristol
Plymouth
London
Norwich
Yarmouth
Harwich
Ostend
Calais
Dover
Brighton
Portsmouth
Southampton
Weymouth
Falmouth
Scilly Is
Guernsey
Jersey
Cherbourg
Havre
Rouen
Paris
Orleans
Nantes
Brest
Caen
Dieppe
Amiens
Lille
Metz
Strasbourg
Nancy
Dijon
Lyons
Geneva
Bordeaux
Toulouse
Montpellier
Marseilles
Nice
Corsica
Bastia
Ajaccio
Sardinia
Cagliari
Balearic Is
Minorca
Majorca
Iviza
Gibraltar
Tangier
Algiers
Bona
Constantine
Tunis
Malta
Sicily
Palermo
Messina
Catania
Syracuse
Naples
Rome
Leghorn
Florence
Genoa
Milan
Turin
Venice
Trieste
Fiume
Zara
Ancona
Adriatic Sea
Corfu
Cape Matapan
Candia
Smyrna
Constantinople
Gallipoli
Adrianople
Varna
Odessa
Sebastopol
Kertch
Taganrog
Azoff
Crimea
Black Sea
Sea of Azoff
Caucasus
Tiflis
Baku
Caspian Sea
Astrakan
Volga
Don
Dnieper
Kiev
Moscow
Nijni Novgorod
Kazan
Perm
Archangel
Wardhuus
Tornea
Uleaborg
Wiborg
St Petersburg
Cronstadt
Revel
Riga
Memel
Dantzic
Konigsberg
Stettin
Berlin
Potsdam
Magdeburg
Hanover
Brunswick
Cassel
Frankfort
Mayence
Coblentz
Cologne
Aix-la-Chapelle
Liege
Namur
Brussels
Ghent
Bruges
Antwerp
Rotterdam
Amsterdam
Helder
Utrecht
Arnheim
Zwolle
Groningen
Leeuwarden
Emden
Bremen
Hamburg
Lubeck
Rostock
Stralsund
Copenhagen
Elsinore
Odense
Aalborg
Skagen
Hirtshals
Christiansand
Stavanger
Bergen
Drontheim
Throndhjem
Hammerfest
Mageroe
Vardhuus
Varanger Fiord
North Cape
Nordkyn
Loffoden Is
Vestfiord
Hardanger Fiord
Sognefiord
Romsdal
Sundmore
Jotunfield
Dovrefield
Kiolen Mts
Sulitelma
Ulea R
Torne R
Kemi R
Kuopio
Jyvaskyla
Tavastehus
Tammerfors
Abo
Aland Is
Gulf of Finland
Gulf of Bothnia
Lake Ladoga
Lake Onega
Lake Peipus
Lake Wener
Lake Wetter
Lake Mälar
Lake Hielmar
Lake Wenern
Lake Wetter
Lake Constance
Lake Geneva
Lake Como
Lake Garda
Lake Maggiore
Lake Lucerne
Lake Zurich
Lake Neufchatel
Lake Thun
Lake Brienz
Lake Wallenstadt
Lake Zug
Lake Lugano
Lake Balaton
Lake Platten
Lake Neusiedler
Lake Scutari
Lake Ochrida
Lake Prespa
Lake Janina
Lake Copais
Lake Trasimene
Lake Bolsena
Lake Vico
Lake Bracciano
Lake Albano
Lake Nemi
Lake Fucino
Lake Agnano
Lake Averno
Lake Lesina
Lake Varano
Lake Salpi
Lake Orbitello
Lake Maremma
Lake Massaciuccoli
Lake Bientina
Lake Fusaro
Lake Patria
Lake Maggiore
Lake Garda
Lake Como
Lake Iseo
Lake Lugano
Lake Orta
Lake Varese
Lake Pusiano
Lake Annone
Lake Alserio
Lake Segrino
Lake Montorfano

industrial revival in Europe, and which it will be to the interest of all to render more tolerable and moderate."[12]

The negotiation of peace, nominally concluded at Versailles, has in fact been continued at a succession of inter-allied conferences, known as meetings of the Supreme Council; and those terms which are supposedly irrevocable may yet be brought into line with peace-time sentiments by virtue of the clause in the Covenant of the League of Nations which ordains the "reconsideration of Treaties which have become inapplicable." When, and if Germany shows a loyal spirit of co-operation, and is in a position to agree to a Treaty not handed to her on the point of a bayonet, but freely discussed and unreservedly accepted, then peace will be firmly established in Western Europe.

# CHAPTER III

## POLAND, 1920

"No doubt but ye are the People—your throne is above the King's ;
Whoso speaks in your presence must say acceptable things."
RUDYARD KIPLING.

### 1.

THE turbulent sea of European politics took long to subside after the storm of the Great War ; and in the years immediately following the cessation of hostilities foreign policy, in the old sense of the word, was not possible. When a distressed ship is struggling to keep herself above water, the course she pursues for the moment becomes a matter of comparative indifference. The nations of Europe were each in real danger of sinking. Most were concerned to make themselves seaworthy. They forsook distant enterprises to essay the less glorious but more necessary task of economic, administrative, and legislative reconstruction.

The first clear-cut international issue to emerge was the quarrel between Poland and Bolshevist Russia. The security of Poland was considered to be essential to the stability of Europe by both Britain and France. It was menaced by her formidable neighbour. The question presented itself to British statesmen whether Britain should adopt a policy of intervention or non-intervention, and if she decided to help Poland, what form should her intervention take?

The restoration of Polish independence had been one of the great achievements of the Allies, and a State which had been conspicuous in mediæval history, and had then suffered extinction at the hands of its

neighbours, was again called upon to play its part in the polity of Central Europe. The Poles are a fascinating, elusive, and disappointing people. They are so lively and so talented that they seem destined to achieve much; yet what they enterprise with enthusiasm they often abandon upon the least discouragement. They are a race and not a nation, a people not a State. They are a moral force rather than an organised body politic. They are a mercurial, fluctuating element in Central Europe without defined boundaries—racial or geographical. They are Slavs surrounded on three sides by Slavs; and with the exception of the Carpathian Mountains in the south, no topographical obstacles interpose between race and race. Poland is but part of the great European plain which stretches unbroken from Central Germany to the eastern limits of Russia; and her people have mingled easily eastward and north-eastward with kindred Slavs. In mediæval Europe, Polish civilisation outstripped that of her eastern neighbours; and Polish gentlemen carried the culture of Warsaw eastward into Russia, and acquired in personal property most of the land as far as Minsk and Kieff. This portion of the former empire of the Tsars is inhabited by "Little" or "White" Russians, a race steeped in the grossest superstitions and primitive ignorance.[1] This wholly unprogressive people came easily under the sway of Polish overlords, whose descendants continue to exercise a very considerable influence in the social and political life of Warsaw.

The same process of expansion had carried Poles into Lithuania on the north-east; and the influx of gentry had here been reinforced by large numbers of Polish peasants whom they imported as labour. Another stream of Poles had flowed due north towards Danzig, the German seaport which affords Poland her nearest outlet to the sea.

The Polish kingdom had once extended over all this territory where Polish magnates lived, and thus formed an empire which included thousands of Russians and Lithuanians. These great families, however, had

never shown conspicuous sense of public service or aptitude for government; and largely as a result of their conflicting ambitions and readiness to invoke the foreigner's aid against their compatriot rivals Poland fell from her high estate, till at the end of the eighteenth century she was partitioned between Russia, Austria, and Germany. The partition of Poland need not here be discussed in its historical aspect; but it remains a fact of living interest to the student of Polish politics to-day, for it has impressed three different stamps upon Polish character. For over a century, more than half Poland has been under the loose but tyrannical sway of Russia: a second part has lain under the strict, efficient but sterilising rule of Prussia: a third and happier portion shared in the fortunes of Austria, and became to a considerable degree attached to her institutions. It must be many years before the Polish nation and the Polish army become fused into an organic whole.

In Galicia alone, the part over which Austria ruled, no systematic attempt was made to suppress Polish nationality. The denationalisation of the Poles became ever more and more a feature of Prussian and Russian policy; but the chief result of these efforts was an embitterment against the oppressing neighbours which is bound to affect Polish foreign relations for at least a generation. It would be as reasonable to exhort schoolboys to kiss the hand of a fallen bully as to urge the Poles at once to fraternise with Prussians and Russians.

Their fiery, provocative nationalism, which itself contributed to their downfall, saved the national character from submergence. Some will maintain that the Polish character has made Polish history the tragedy that it is, others may argue that Polish history has made the Poles what they are. To all it is clear that the same preference for glory abroad over quiet husbandry at home is still a characteristic: the same quarrelsomeness and jealousy of authority which in the past discontented and banded together against their

ruler the most powerful personages of the country, any of whom might himself aspire to the elective crown of Poland, persisted still in the pressing external dangers which beset the country in 1920. Internal faction was never quelled. When the foreign diplomatists fled to Posen from Warsaw before the approaching Russian armies they found that Posnania's condition for rendering further assistance was that Posen should take the leadership of Poland out of the hands of Warsaw. Volunteers to the colours were brigaded according to political persuasion. Success in the field was recorded for the furtherance of Party interests. During those critical days at the end of July (1920), when the eyes of Europe were turned on Warsaw to learn whether or not negotiations for an armistice could be arranged with the Bolsheviks, foreigners noted with astonishment that the attention of Warsaw politicians was centred on who would or would not secure portfolios in the Ministry which a newly appointed premier was attempting to form.

2.

At Versailles, in 1919, Bolshevism had been, in fact if not in form, proscribed by Europe; and Poland, the largest State upon which it impinged, regarded herself as Europe's champion against the destructive doctrines of Russia's new rulers. The Poles were very much pleased to assume the role. They found it agreeable to be able lawfully, as they thought, to chastise the Power which had so tyrannised them in the past. There is, too, a Quixotic strain in the character of this paradoxical people, which made the part of knight-errant against the scourge of Europe peculiarly congenial. As John Sobieski had saved European civilisation from the Turks in the seventeenth century, so they would again show themselves the saviours of European society; they would be worthy successors of their other great national hero, Kosciusko, who had fought and suffered and won fame in Europe and in America in the cause of freedom. They had not made

peace with Russia: between Poland and Bolshevism no compromise was possible.

By the spring of 1920 the anti-Bolshevist Russian leaders, Koltchak and Denikin, in spite of British and French support, had both succumbed. Poland was left to face Bolshevist Russia alone. Not quite alone, for she managed in April of that year to come to an agreement with the Ukraine, the southernmost province of Russia, which was dissatisfied with Bolshevist rule. By this agreement the ill-organised Ukraine undertook to help Poland, who was in return to constitute it an independent State. Marshal Pilsudski, Poland's President-elect, hoped to perform a similar service for White Russia, and thus to establish between himself and Russia proper two extensive buffer States. Though nominally independent, they were obviously immature, and would be dependent upon Poland for their security.

In accordance with this plan, therefore, the Polish armies made a campaign against Russia in May 1920. A great eastward drive was very successful. They swept Bolshevist resistance before them, and entered Kieff, which they destined to be the Capital of the new Ukrainian State. The distinct entity of the Ukraine was also, it should be noted, admitted by the Bolsheviks, who had set up a separate Soviet Ukrainian Republic, with a movable Capital somewhere east of the river Dnieper. The future of this country was of great importance, inasmuch as it contained some of the richest cornfields of Europe, and the great South Russian port of Odessa. The struggle between Russia and Poland was really for the control of its rich resources, which included further east the great Donetz coal basin.

The release of the Ukraine from the paralysing maladministration of the Bolsheviks was regarded by Poland as a matter of European interest, and a service which they themselves were well qualified to render in mandate for the Western Powers. A great part of Europe was on the verge of starvation. Ukraine could supply the corn. The British Prime Minister had

himself talked of its "bulging corn-bins." Allied vessels might call at Odessa. If Poland were assisted to reach it by land South Russia would be opened up to Europe, whose most pressing need of the moment would be relieved. The whole of this vast area might be freed from the incubus of economic theories which had diminished production to a bare provision for the producer's own needs; and a prosperous State might be established under the ægis of Poland and financed by the capital of Britain and France. The project found some support in Paris. The ardent Poles, dreaming of a past kingdom which had stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea, merging in imagination free Ukraine with a Poland enlarged by a grateful Europe, looked eagerly back from conquered Kieff for support from the west in their heavy, self-imposed task.

They saw that London, so far from supporting them, had just received with every mark of official favour a representative of their arch-enemy, M. Krassin.

## 3.

It was as members of the Centro-Soyuz, or Russian Co-operative Societies that the Russian Trade Delegation headed by Krassin came to London at the end of May. The British Government was fully aware that the members of the Central Board of the Centro-Soyuz had all either been arrested or expelled by the Soviet authorities. Information as to the fate of every single member of the Committee, a small and distinguished body, was available in London at the time, and was subsequently confirmed by the British Secret Service. They had been disposed of by Russia's new rulers as being at the head of an organisation which might become a powerful centre of anti-Bolshevik activity. The British Government, therefore, deliberately deceived the public in announcing (in January 1920), that negotiations were about to begin with the Co-operative Societies.

M. Krassin had nothing to do with the Co-

operative Societies, and was simply an agent of the Soviet Government, which in form we did not recognise. As if to prove his staunchness to the Bolshevist régime he included on his staff a Jew, by name Rothstein, who "at once threw all his energies into a campaign in favour of Communism" in the United Kingdom.[2] Propaganda was conducted with the unscrupulous skill of a trained expert, to whom bribery was a legitimate, indeed the most ordinary method of diplomacy. Bolsheviks would not be Bolsheviks if they did not advocate communism in every country to which their agents are admitted; for they represent a class creed and profess international, not national aims; it is immaterial to its apostles in what country they find themselves—their duty is always the same, to despoil the rich, to communise property, to destroy the Christian religion, to undermine existing authority. It is difficult, therefore, to suppose that the British Prime Minister can have felt a sincere belief in the assurance of the Russian representatives that they would "confine themselves to commercial dealings.[3]

The Russian Trade Delegation lost no time in seeking the most likely adherents in England. It knew where to look, for it had previously had most gratifying reports from an agent in London as to the attitude on Russian questions of the so-called Labour newspaper, the *Daily Herald*, which it was soon able to declare "acted as if it were their (Bolsheviks') organ." Relations were established between the Soviet envoys and the British journal: and through it with the British Labour leaders. These formed themselves later into a "Council of Action," and were able, by threatening a general strike of all organised labour, to exercise extreme pressure upon the Prime Minister.

The purpose of the Russians' visit was to effect a Trade Agreement with Britain. Their main object, however, through the summer of 1920, was to prevent effective British action in support of Poland, in which, as we shall see, they were completely successful. Dockers refused to load munitions destined for Poland,

and British foreign policy was for a while laid down at secret conferences between alien trade delegates and a handful of proletariat leaders.

4.

The spirits of the Poles were dashed by the news from England. Warsaw papers appeared with the heading "Lloyd-George shakes hands with Lenin"; and to every soldier in the Polish army the London meeting seemed a national disaster.

A long-prepared offensive was opened by the Bolshevist armies in mid-May 1920. For the first month the dispirited Polish army put up a fair resistance, especially on the north-eastern front. In the area between the rivers Beresina and Dwina some fierce fighting took place; charges were countered with the bayonet; and in the south cavalry play with lance and sword added a dash of the picturesque so rare in modern European battles.

Thereafter, however, Polish resistance ceased. Kieff was retaken by the Bolsheviks on 10th June, and their armies advanced steadily along the whole front from the Dwina river to the borders of Roumania. The territory overrun by the Poles in their great advance in May was recovered by Russia. The "Red" armies drew ever nearer to Poland proper; and it became a matter of European concern to consider what steps should be taken in the event of her safety being threatened.

At the beginning of July the Entente Powers—Britain, France, Italy, and Belgium—were meeting at Spa in order to discuss primarily the payment of German reparation. Opportunity was taken to consider the case of Poland. The Polish Prime Minister, M. Grabski, proceeded to Spa, nominally because Poland hoped to be awarded some small share of the German moneys, and because she was closely interested in East Prussia in German disarmament, but in reality because her Government wanted to ascertain on what

conditions Poland might expect help from the Great Powers.

On 10th July M. Grabski saw Mr Lloyd-George alone. The British Prime Minister opened the conversation by remarking, "Your army is at present on territory which does not appear to be Polish."[4] Making all his observations in curt, peremptory tones he dwelt with great emphasis on the fact that Poland was surrounded by enemies, Russian, German, and Czech: he said that he had received a "bad report" of her administration in Eastern Galicia: that there were complaints against the Poles in Danzig: he recalled to M. Grabski that Poland was still dependent on the Allies' goodwill for a favourable settlement of the Upper Silesian, Eastern Galician, and Danzig questions: he effectively cowed the Polish Premier, who returned from the interview crestfallen and nervous.[5] This was the precise condition, no doubt, that it suited Mr Lloyd-George to induce; for the policy which he prevailed upon M. Grabski to accept was one which any Pole would have great difficulty in adopting, and still more in recommending to his high-spirited compatriots. M. Grabski had in effect been enjoined to withdraw the Polish armies from where they stood in White Russia and Ukraine to the official frontier of Poland, a distance of about 200 kilometres (125 miles). In return, "the British Government and its allies would feel bound to help Poland with all the means at their disposal" if the Bolshevist armies crossed that frontier.

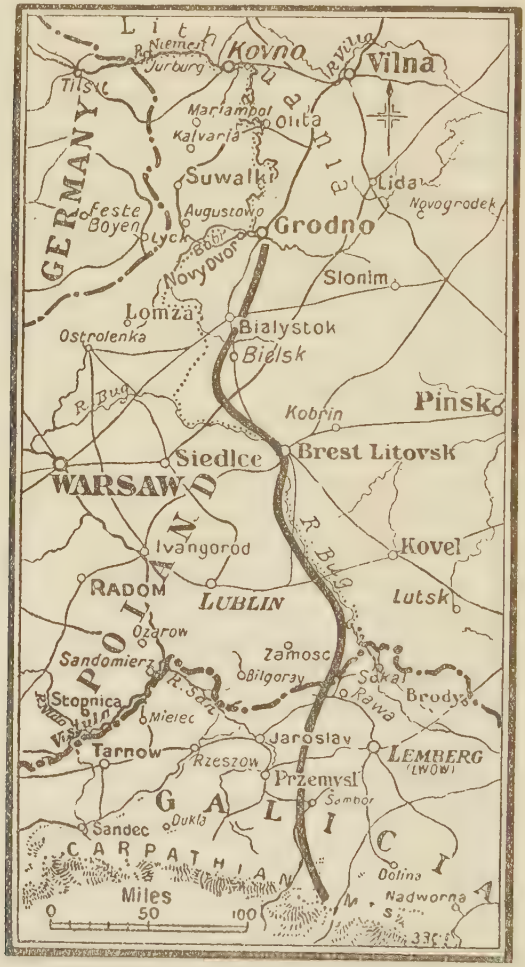
This arrangement was communicated by wireless telegraphy to the Soviet Government on 11th July by Britain, but by no other Power. The frontier was defined "approximately": Moscow was invited to send representatives to London to arrange peace terms with Poland, and an answer was required within a week. On the seventh day, 18th July, the Soviet sent a reply, which was described by Mr Lloyd-George as "incoherent," and by the French Premier as "impertinent." The invitation to London was refused,

but the Russian Government expressed a willingness to discuss peace terms with Poland direct.

Thereupon, on 20th July, Lord Curzon sent another Note to Moscow, in which he repeated the British determination to afford Poland the promised help "if the Soviet armies continued to advance." In this second despatch the precise frontier beyond which they were not to pass was not defined. Thus was tardy wisdom shown; for the definition sent on 11th July was a particularly unfortunate one. From the south northward the line was announced as following the old Russo-Galician frontier to the Bug: following that river to Brest-Litovsk: thence past Grodno (exclusive): north of Grodno turning sharply west: passing just north of Suwalki. It was for part of the way a purely imaginary line. It was that which had been traced by the Supreme Council on 8th December 1919, and marked no doubt on one or two ambassadorial maps in Paris: but unknown to cartographers, unmarked *in situ:* never previously communicated to the unrecognised Soviet Government: perfectly meaningless, of course, to Bolshevist commanders in the field, who, had they been animated by a desire to defer to the behests of the Western Powers, would find no boundary marks, stones, fences, customs buildings or any of the usual frontier signs to indicate the points beyond which they were not to advance. The Bolshevist armies, ill-led and ill-disciplined, bungled over this line at Nowy Dwor on 24th July 1920. By inept diplomacy the pledge of the British Empire was involved, and we were technically bound to go to the assistance of Poland "with all the means at our disposal."

The only frontier between Poland and Russia which may be found on maps and of which tokens are visible *in situ* is the boundary of so-called "Congress" Poland —the Poland, that is to say, which was marked out at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and which, through many vicissitudes of status, retained her limits unchanged to the outbreak of the Great War of 1914.

This line is the same as that chosen by the Supreme Council, except over the important section from Brest-Litovsk to Grodno, where it follows the ethnographic




RUSSO-POLISH FRONTIER, 1920 (July).

..... Boundary of Congress Poland. —— Supreme Council's line.

distribution more closely than the Supreme Council's line, and is less favourable to Poland. That is to say, at the point of furthest Bolshevist advance the frontier is approximately 50 miles nearer Warsaw than the

line indicated to the Soviet Government by Britain. The Bolsheviks crossed the Supreme Council line on 24th July. But before the recognised Polish boundaries their armies hovered for approximately seventy-two hours—24th to 27th July.[6] It is pardonable to suppose that the Soviet Government employed the time in ascertaining whether the British Government was in earnest or not: whether it intended to translate its words into action: whether to penetrate into Poland proper would bring the active support of Britain and France to the Polish armies.

The advices from their agents in London apparently reassured the Soviet authorities: Britain would take no action, and the advance might be continued with impunity. On 27th July the Bolshevist armies moved forward into ethnographic Poland; and their advance suffered no check thenceforward until it was met by the Polish armies before the gates of Warsaw. At the same time Bolshevist diplomacy cleverly disarmed possible protests of the British Government by suddenly accepting the proposal of a London Peace Conference, which only a week before it had rejected with so much contumelious verbiage.

During the crucial days when vigorous action might have staved off from Poland the horrors of Bolshevist occupation, Mr Lloyd-George resorted to a favourite device in time of trouble—he appointed a Commission of Inquiry. His propensity to round-table conferences displayed itself, on this occasion, when the time for discussion was past. On 25th July Lord d'Abernon arrived at the head of a British Mission, which also included Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary to the Cabinet, and General Sir Percy Radcliffe, a distinguished member of the War Office. With them arrived M. Jusserand at the head of a French Mission, which included General Weygand, Chief of Staff to Marshal Foch.

Sixteen days before, on 9th July, the British Minister in Warsaw, Sir Horace Rumbold, had spoken earnestly to the author about the coming danger to Poland, and the peril which it involved to

the precarious stability of Central Europe. He outlined probable developments with accuracy, and remarked that unless British and French aid were forthcoming, the safety of Warsaw could not be guaranteed. He added that he was reporting in this sense to H.M.'s Government.

Sir Horace Rumbold had been Britain's representative in Warsaw for the greater part of a year: he had formed a shrewd estimate of the abilities of the Poles: he had given his Government a clear indication of what was likely to happen: when what he foresaw did happen Mr Lloyd-George, with his inveterate distrust of professional diplomatists, sent personages unacquainted with diplomacy to make a separate report. Lord d'Abernon is a financier of repute and a man of remarkable general ability, well qualified for the post assigned to him as Ambassador in Berlin in the present unusual conditions. He had enjoyed, however, no previous experience of diplomatic work: he had only just taken up his duties in Berlin when he was ordered to proceed to Warsaw: he was plunged into a complicated situation with no knowledge of local conditions, with no acquaintance of that subtle and dominating element in the situation, the Slav temperament.

No one could accustom himself in a few days to the extraordinary Polish mentality, which seems psychologically incapable of looking ahead. Poles live absolutely in and for the moment. To make engagements, to keep them, is alien to them. Careless and lighthearted, they enjoy existence as no other people. When the Bolsheviks had advanced to within a score of miles of Warsaw, and it was possible that they might appear within the city almost at any moment, the streets of the Capital were normal in appearance, except than an exodus of the well-to-do had lessened the vehicular traffic. The station indeed presented a scene of struggling confusion, as thousands of would-be passengers, mostly Jews, fought for tickets first and then for standing-room in the departing

trains. But the common Poles, easily excited by wine or dance, were perfectly passive in the face of conquest by the traditional enemy, whose domination seemed to the more fatalistic among them a thing decreed. Strolling along the great bridge over the Vistula which had been blown up by the retreating Russian armies in 1915, the author was astonished to find a handful of men at work mending the pavement! The bridge was still severed in the middle, and therefore unusable. It was a typically Polish proceeding, when every able-bodied man was needed for the army, or for urgent national purposes, to leave workmen engaged upon a useless task. In this contradictory people faith and fatalism seem equally strong. On Sunday, 8th August, when the enemy was hammering at the gates, Warsaw was the scene of a remarkable supplication to God for deliverance. The whole city was in the streets, proceeding behind banners and religious emblems from church to church. Prayers were chanted all the time, every man, participant or bystander, bareheaded. More impressive than the size of the procession was its earnestness and solemnity. A look of devout yearning lighted every face. A military band, at the head of half a battalion, passed the procession unnoticed — in most countries, at such a moment, the soldiers would surely have been the recipients of encouraging cheers or some signs of grateful enthusiasm.

And if the Poles were of peculiar mentality the methods of their enemies, Slavonic they too, were no less unusual. During all these hostilities arrangements for peace proceeded; but the armies did not fight and the peace negotiators did not meet; no concrete result seemed likely to be produced either by the soldiers or the diplomatists. At the suggestion of the Areopagus of Spa, Poland had undertaken to open armistice negotiations; and the Soviet representatives in London expressed their lively desire to come to terms. Accordingly wireless messages were expedited almost daily from Warsaw to the "Foreign Commissary" of

the Soviet Republic, a personage whom none had seen and who acquired a sort of mythical character by his elusiveness. He was reputed to sleep by day and work by night, and messages could not be handed to him while he slept: his replies were delayed by curious breakdowns on the Moscow wireless apparatus: or the Warsaw instrument could not be attuned to the pitch of the Russian message: on one occasion when the Polish operators were just getting through, and their call had been acknowledged, the Moscow telegraphist began urgently to call up Tashkent! Finally, on 3rd August, it was decided that delegates from each side should meet at Minsk. Some observers were of opinion that neither the Poles nor their adversaries desired to come to terms. Only persistent pressure by the Allies' representatives in Warsaw kept them up to the decision to proceed. Lord d'Abernon desired that the writer should go to Minsk with the Polish delegates, in order that an independent observer might form an opinion as to who should be responsible for the breakdown of the negotiations in the event of no armistice being signed. The Polish Government thereupon stated that the Bolshevist authorities would certainly not allow any journalist to pass: upon Bolshevist consent having been obtained, the Polish Government said that there would be no room in the available motor cars for any but the delegates themselves. How differently the matter was viewed in Warsaw and in London may be gathered from the eagerness with which politicians and public in England looked forward to the Minsk meeting as likely to bring a cessation of hostilities. Definite, foreseeable conclusions are rare occurrences in Slavonic countries.

Meanwhile, with little or no fighting, the Bolsheviks' advance continued. *Moral* counts above everything among the susceptible Slavs. Battles were decided by it on the Polish front. On the French and Flanders fronts, even in stale trench warfare, one side or the other was usually "on top"—and the other side, however little it might admit it, instinctively felt that,

temporarily at any rate, it was the "underdog." This intuitive feeling was very highly developed in the Slav opponents; and it was generally acted upon. It was known beforehand which side was likely to win in the event of an encounter, and the other side retired. Only when the issue did not seem clearly indicated was there a stiff fight for an hour or two to decide the question. Another cause which militated against encounter was that the Poles regularly withdrew all rolling-stock in their retirement, and the Bolsheviks had none to replace it. The latter had therefore to rely for transport upon an improvised service of farm-wagons, which kept them to the roads. In those large regions roads and railways are few and far between, and with the Poles using the one and the Russians the other meetings were easily avoidable. And the opponents did not ardently desire armed meetings—the Poles because they had their "plan"—the Bolshevist soldiers because they did not wish to get themselves killed. Bolsheviks have nowhere shown much readiness to sacrifice themselves for their cause, and were in this case willing crusaders only so long as the crusade brought ample booty.

The Polish "plan" filled the military and political leaders in Warsaw with complete confidence. In vain Lord d'Abernon and the other Allied representatives pressed the Warsaw Government to move to safer quarters, or at least to decide whither they should proceed in case of desperate need. To all alike Prince Sapieha, the Foreign Minister, declared that Warsaw was "as safe as London"; and that the Government saw no reason for leaving it. Marshal Pilsudski, Chief of the Polish State, plied by the special Missions with inquiries of his intentions, alternating with tentative offers of potential help, maintained an obdurate silence. Gruff, distrustful of foreigners, a conspirator all his life and little given to speech, Pilsudski only vouchsafed as answer to suggestions of Allied help a query as to where the proffered soldiers or supplies might be found? If they were outside Poland at the moment

they could be of no use to him. One day, without announcement, he left Warsaw to take command of his armies at the front. The next thing heard about him was that he had won a sweeping victory.

In a new land, surrounded by strange people, Lord d'Abernon took his time to appraise the complicated situation. Common-sense made no other course possible. At the end of a fortnight he made up his mind to recommend the supply by Britain and France of arms, equipment, and ammunition for twenty-two Divisions: he also emphasised the paramount importance of keeping the Danzig route open, even if British troops who were stationed there had to be employed: by that way alone could the material reach Warsaw, and a Bolshevist force had already passed to the north-west of the Capital. Other forces were within a day's march on the east. In accordance with instructions from home the British envoy also urged upon the Polish Government to make peace at all costs. He then fled to a safer place. Posen, in German Poland was selected, and Lord d'Abernon, M. Jusserand, and all the chiefs and the Diplomatic Corps[7] left Warsaw at midnight on 13th August, and arrived in Posen next day. Thence they attempted to advise the Polish Government by telephone. The performance reminded one of some of the messages which used to be received in the front trenches from Brigade Headquarters. The guns round Warsaw, where a battle began on the 14th, made it impossible for the Polish Government to hear, apparently, at any rate to take, the advice so proffered. When the Bolshevist forces were defeated, the Allied representatives returned to the Capital very much discredited.

## 5.

France, however, escaped most of this discredit. She had furnished General Weygand, and to his skill the generous Poles attributed their victory. Weygand himself stated that his contribution to the defeat of the

Bolsheviks had been to amend in minor points the plan already made by Marshal Pilsudski. Pilsudski knew Russia well enough to realise that Russian armies have seldom been successful at any distance from their own country; that their organisation was so inefficient that the farther they proceeded from their base the less formidable they became. He also doubtless reckoned that, by drawing the enemy well within Poland's frontier, he would improve his prospect of gaining Allied help. He therefore made the bold resolve to allow the main Bolshevist army to approach within a few miles of Warsaw, placing himself meanwhile at a point upon its flank, some miles to the south of the advancing column, and to the east of its head. On 14th August he struck north with great vigour. The main force of the Soviet Republic was severed from its line of communications, and soon became a mob of armed and half-starved pillagers. Subsidiary operations well supported Pilsudski's main movement, and the whole of the Bolshevist forces were soon retreating in rout back to the Russian frontier.

The French were associated with the Polish victory not only by the presence of General Weygand: French officers, members of a large Military Mission which was training the Polish army, assisted all the principal Staffs in the field throughout the operations. Moreover, French policy, unlike ours, was consistently and unambiguously pro-Polish. France had, unlike Britain, encouraged Poland's original offensive in May; and already at Spa, in early July, she had decided to help Poland; and she never withheld her assistance until the danger was averted. Although nominally acting in conjunction with Britain, she in reality pursued a separate policy. On more than one occasion the transport of arms supplied by France through Danzig was held up by the action of German stevedores. They refused to unload the cargo for the benefit of Poland. The inter-Allied High Commissioner of Danzig "Free City" was an Englishman, Sir Reginald Tower; and he announced his inability to interfere in what he chose

to regard as an industrial dispute. Only the prompt action of a French naval commander secured the passage of the arms. The incident created a profound impression in Warsaw, where French alacrity to help was contrasted with British reluctance—a contrast which, if the truth must be told, the French in Poland took every opportunity of stressing. Later, when Polish armies pursued the beaten Bolsheviks over the border once more into White Russia, the representatives of Britain and of France were instructed by their respective Foreign Offices to dissuade the Poles from passing beyond the frontier laid down for them by the Supreme Council. The British Envoy delivered his unpalatable advice to the Polish Foreign Minister and left: the French Envoy also delivered his message, in correct and formal language; he then sat down over an informal cup of coffee, and the gist of his remarks was hard to reconcile with the purport of his official communication. In mid-August France recognised the Russian Government of General Wrangel, who was advancing against the Bolshevist Capital from the south. She thus openly took up an attitude at variance with Britain's, who by this time, departing from her policy in regard to Koltchak and Denikin, discountenanced any armed attempt to overthrow Bolshevism. These incidents only deserve record as instances of the necessarily artificial nature of allied collaboration on occasions where their real interests are not identical. It cannot be the case that British or French interests, or those of any other two nations, can always coincide in all matters, from Central Europe to China, and from Syria to Siam. They illustrate a point which must be borne in mind when the question arises whether the Entente Cordiale should be transformed into a formal treaty, or whether our obligations to each other should become more, or less, definite.

6.

Poland had three distinct claims upon British support:—

1. The Prime Minister's declaration at Spa.
2. Article X. of the League of Nations, by which members of the League "undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League." (Poland was an original member.)
3. The moral obligation involved by our share in the re-creation of Poland as a European State.

A fourth might be added, namely, the announcement by the inter-Allied Mission in Warsaw that "it had taken measures to prevent delay in taking action should the negotiations (by wireless with the Soviet Government) not lead to the conclusion of an armistice" (28th July).

Mr Lloyd-George, moreover, frequently led Poland to expect that British aid would be forthcoming. In his speech in the House of Commons on 21st July, he said that "the Allies had come to the conclusion that steps must be taken to arrest the destruction of Poland. . . ." "In reply to Moscow it had been made clear that if the Russians marched on despite a Polish application for an armistice, the Allies would have to assist Poland." "The Poles needed equipment. This France and Britain would supply." "Our interests coincide with our duty." "We cannot let Poland perish."

These words can hardly be called ambiguous. Yet they were empty phrases. When the Polish troops, at the behest of the British Prime Minister at Spa, had receded 125 miles from the positions which they originally held: when the Bolshevist forces had passed, without any question or possibility of doubt, over the line beyond which they had been forbidden by the Allies

to go: when the clear case had arisen for intervention, Britain did not intervene. Either the promise should not have been made, or it should have been redeemed. Either Mr Lloyd-George should have declared beforehand our unreadiness to assist Poland, or else he should have boldly informed the country that the pledge having been given no alternative remained but to honour it: and he should have stood or fallen by the fulfilment of his word. As a consequence of our inaction the political credit of Britain suffered grievous depreciation in Central Europe. Mr Lloyd-George would certainly have risked his position if he had definitely assisted Poland; but the good name of the country is more important than the continuance in office of any particular Prime Minister.

Mr Lloyd-George, before he went to Spa, knew that Britain was still exhausted after the war, and that any exertion in Central Europe would be distasteful. That knowledge should have been one of his guiding considerations at the Conference, and should have restrained him from giving the definite pledge to M. Grabski. Having once promised aid, it would have been more statesmanlike to make clear to his countrymen the obligation to intervene, and to Poland that such assistance would only take the form of supplies—equipment, ammunition, and stores. More than that the Poles need never have been led to expect: and to make such supply was within the compass of Britain's strength, however exhausted by long effort. France could and did assist Poland, although her material and human losses in the war were greater than ours; and she now consequently holds the dominant position in Central Europe.

The supreme cause of Mr Lloyd-George's relapse was the pressure, one might almost say the blackmail, of a body of Labour leaders styling themselves the "Council of Action." These gentlemen were under the direct influence of the Soviet representatives in England, and their whole policy was expressed in the phrase: "Hands off Russia." They threatened to

call a general strike if the British Prime Minister pursued the policy which he had outlined. Mr Lloyd-George had several interviews with these rival Foreign Secretaries. On 10th August Mr Bevin, acting as their spokesman, said that "they had no hesitation in putting their cards on the table, and that if war were carried on directly in support of Poland or indirectly . . . there would be a match set to explosive material, the result of which none of them could foresee." Mr Lloyd-George replied that the Government "were all for peace," and added: "I want to know this: does this mean that if the independence of Poland is really menaced . . . and if Bolshevist Russia does for Poland what their Tsarist predecessors did a century and a half ago, we cannot send a single pair of boots there?" Mr Bevin, after some equivocations, replied that "Labour would consider its position when that occasion arose." The Prime Minister closed the discussion by remarking that "that was good enough for him. He did not think the occasion had arisen."

This discussion occurred on 10th August. At that moment the Bolshevist armies were within 50 miles of Warsaw. The "threat to Poland's independence," which Mr Lloyd-George "did not think had arisen," appeared in so different a light to his representatives in Warsaw that they were at the moment making preparations to fly the menaced city. The British Government could plead, and Mr Lloyd-George did in fact plead, that he had the assurance of the Soviet Government that the independence of Poland was not threatened. It was indeed possible that Russia did not intend to incorporate Poland. But there are other ways of threatening the independence of a country than attempting to annex it. The Bolshevist peril was no less deadly to Poland's new won freedom in that its most probable form was that of a government dependent upon Moscow and imposed by Russian bayonets—a government, moreover, opposed to the existing political system of Warsaw in theory and in fact. It was the precise case envisaged by Article X. of the League

Covenant in the words "to preserve against external aggression . . . the *existing political independence* of its members."

The Bolshevist leaders were so confident of imposing upon Poland a government of their own peculiar brand that they had actually brought it with them in their baggage-train. It consisted, in nucleus, of three renegade Poles who had become ardent and bloodthirsty devotees of Bolshevism. Their names were Dzerjinsky, Marchlewsky, and Kon. They reached Wyszkoff, within 30 miles of Warsaw, on the day when the battle for the Capital began, intending to complete the short remainder of their journey on the morrow. Meanwhile as "Provisional Soviet Government of Poland" they distributed broadcast in occupied Poland fly-leaves in which all Poles were taunted with their reliance on the Allies who had "drawn them into this murderous war," and exhorted to "unite against their exploiters," seize their officers, and march on Warsaw "to save that which had not been destroyed by the Government of the squires." The freedom of Poland was not indeed menaced by the words of Krassin in London, but by the acts of his colleagues in and behind the battle-line.

## 7.

Mr Lloyd-George believed, in common with most observers, that Poland had largely brought her misfortune upon herself. When in January 1920 the Polish Foreign Minister, M. Patek, had come to London to sound the British Government as to their attitude in the case of a Polish offensive, Mr Lloyd-George had warned him that Britain did not encourage, much less would assist, any such action. He foresaw with almost uncanny intuition, and retailed to M. Patek, the probable consequences which such an offensive would have on Russian national feeling. Peace with a Bolshevik neighbour was difficult, he had said, but Poland should try it. It was therefore

natural that Mr Lloyd-George should not feel extreme sympathy with Poland when her rashness brought its nemesis. Then why did he give her his pledge of support?

A certain amount of formality seems to be essential to effective diplomacy. Mr Lloyd-George saw M. Grabski alone twice at Spa. No representative of the Foreign Office took part in the conversations. The British Minister in Warsaw was put in the humiliating position of not being able to say, three days after the Press had reported Mr Lloyd-George's decision, whether it was in truth the policy of his Government or not. He was without direct communication from Spa, and the Foreign Office was not apparently in a position to impart information until after the Prime Minister's return to London. There is no telling what the country may be committed to by such haphazard diplomacy. Was the guarantee to Poland collective, or particular to Britain? The question was put by Mr Asquith in the House of Commons, but never answered. Nebulous obligations may be a dangerous by-product of amateur diplomacy. Speaking on 12th August (two days, that is to say, before the battle of Warsaw) at a meeting of Coalition Liberals, the Prime Minister said: "But when the terrible question of peace or war has to be decided our duty as a Government is to the people who trust us not to commit their treasure to any unjustifiable adventure. Nothing but the most imperative call of national honour, national safety, and national freedom can justify war." To the Briton seeking guidance in an obscure question such words could bring neither enlightenment nor help. The points of national safety and national honour were raised in the same breath. For Britain it was no question of the first: the Prime Minister's own commitment had made it a case of the second. The nature of British assistance, if any were to be given, should have been made clear from the first moment. The Poles were at first allowed to cherish exaggerated hopes, soon to be changed to disillusionment and

disgust. To the British people the problem was never fully defined, never even properly stated. The public were left to incur a stain on the country's escutcheon with hardly a conception that the national honour was at stake. Britain had ordered Poland, on pain of adverse decisions in Danzig and other places, to withdraw her armies, and to give up territory on which she might have detained her enemy while she perfected her defences nearer home; and Poland had carried out this detested injunction on the explicit understanding that we should assist her if the enemy passed a certain boundary line. Not a finger was raised in her assistance by Britain: our exhortations to the Bolsheviks to cease advancing were not heeded, with the natural consequence that our subsequent exhortations to the Poles not to proceed into White Russia were equally disregarded. A few more such episodes and Britain's wishes will be habitually flouted in Europe, and the power which our diplomacy possesses to check aggression, to prevent injustice or the creation of a situation unfavourable to ourselves, will simply disappear. Insincerity and uncertainty pave the way to diplomatic bankruptcy; after which the only declaration which will be heeded by other nations will be a declaration of war.

# CHAPTER IV

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, 1920-1922 (MAY)

"Men little think how immorally they act in rashly meddling with what they do not understand. Their delusive good intention is no sort of excuse for their presumption." BURKE.

### 1.

IT is an interesting speculation whether Mr Lloyd-George might have been the great general of the war if his upbringing had been military. Of the tactics and strategy of politics he has a mastery bordering upon genius; and we may say of him, as Lord Morley has said of his predecessor in office, Sir Robert Walpole, that he "was not a man of ideals but of expedients, as the commander of an army in a campaign is a man of expedients." And his opportunism, like Walpole's, has fitted the times. To quote again from the same passage: "For us no standing system of foreign policy was possible. It was an epoch of transition." Again the words, "Looking to the quarter in which it was his characteristic habit to look, he doubted whether the House of Commons . . ." apply to our last Prime Minister quite as much as to our first.[1] At Rome, in January 1917, he divined correctly the German plans for the next campaigning season. On his advice projects were prepared for the prompt transport of troops to Italy from France and Britain in the event of need arising upon the Italian front. When the disaster of Caporetto occurred—in October of that year—the Allies were ready to help with a rapidity which baffled the enemy, and Italy was saved.[2] Mr Lloyd-George pressed for, and ultimately obtained, Allied unity

of command. He understood and condemned the exaggerated value placed on the acquisition of Paschendaele Ridge in the winter of 1917-1918. He saw unerringly, at an earlier stage in the war, the pivotal importance of Bulgaria. But the qualities of generalship do not tend to high statesmanship. Costs have but a small place in the soldier's calculations; the objective must be gained regardless of means; his mind is better attuned to destructive than constructive measures. The Duke of Wellington in Whitehall was a poor counterpart of the Iron Duke at Salamanca. In one of his cleverest novels Disraeli happily phrased the incongruity of his military mind with politics: "Rapid combinations, the result of a quick, vigilant, and comprehensive glance are generally triumphant in the field; but in civil affairs, where results are not immediate—in diplomacy and in the management of deliberative assemblies, where there is much intervening time and many counteracting causes—this velocity of decision, this fitful and precipitate action, are often productive of considerable embarrassment and sometimes of terrible discomfiture."[3]

In the Supreme Council's meetings of 1920-1922, which have been a European continuation of the Paris Congress, Mr Lloyd-George's diplomacy has often been fitful and precipitate—"diplomacy by jerks," it has been called by so careful a critic as Lord Grey of Fallodon. The Conferences have usually borne the impress of Mr Lloyd-George's mentality. He has enjoyed a position of great ascendency, due partly to his own talent for negotiation, but chiefly to the political stability of Britain which made him, after the first two meetings, the only survivor of the "Big Four." The meetings have more than once begun without ordered agenda; and have sometimes had as principal result resolutions which ill concealed divergence of views in an ambiguous formula, and which had little or no persistence with previous resolutions on the same subject: often conclusions have been hastily reached because urgent questions awaited treatment at home:

sometimes, as in April 1919 and August 1921, these have been so pressing that Mr Lloyd-George has left the Conferences *in mediis rebus*. On the other hand, some of the decisions have been speedily carried into effect, and whether for better or for worse have had more immediate results than the older diplomatic methods would probably have produced.

Britain's resident official representatives have been uniformly excluded from these meetings, even when they were held, as at Paris, in places where Embassies are established; and a great difficulty in considering Mr Lloyd-George's own diplomacy in the Conferences is caused by the non-publication of Blue Books. Conversations have not been recorded in despatch-form; and the "publicity" of the proceedings hardly compensates for the dearth of a published official record which the older diplomatic methods seldom failed to supply.

The following statement was made by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury in the House of Commons on 3rd April 1922, in answer to a question: "The cost to the British Exchequer of certain International Conferences is estimated to be as follows:—

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| San Remo | £850 | 18 | 11 | Calais | £138 | 9 | 8 |
| Boulogne | 575 | 0 | 0 | Paris (August 1921) | 326 | 2 | 3 |
| Brussels and Spa | 2360 | 2 | 11 | Hythe | 877 | 10 | 6 |
| Lympne | 142 | 19 | 5 | Paris and Cannes | 357 | 11 | 6 |

"In addition, certain expenditure was borne by the Government Hospitality Fund, in respect of the expenses of Conferences in London, which is not included in the above. The accounts of the Conferences at Paris and Cannes are not yet complete."

There had been eighteen meetings, and figures were only given for ten.

The Pan-European Genoa Conference cost the British Treasury £7000 (Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, House of Commons, 25th May 1922).

## LIST OF CHIEF INTER-ALLIED MEETINGS, 1920-1922 (MARCH).

| | Place. | Date. | States Represented. | Principal Subjects Discussed. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1920. | | | | |
| S.C. | Paris | Jan. 8 to 16 | Britain, France, Italy | Fiume. Trade with Russia. |
| S.C. | London | Feb. 12 to 23 | Britain, France, Italy, and later Greece. | Fiume. War Criminals. Constantinople (to be left to Turks). |
| S.C. | San Remo | Apr. 19 to 26 | Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Greece. | Anglo-French relations. Germany invited to send delegates to a forthcoming Conference. Greco-Turk peace. |
| | Hythe | May 15 to 17 | Britain, France, Belgium | Conditions in which Germans to be received. |
| | Hythe (also called Lympne meeting) | June 19 | Britain, France, Greece | Greco-Turk peace. |
| S.C. | Boulogne | June 21 to 22 | Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Japan. | Disarmament. Reparation. Greeks entrusted with task of ejecting Turkish forces from Thrace and Smyrna district. |
| S.C. | Brussels | July 2 to 3 | Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Japan. | Reparation. |
| S.C. | Spa | July 5 to 16 | Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Japan and Germany (and Poland). | Disarmament. Reparation (especially coal). Poland. |
| 1921. | Boulogne | July 27 | Britain, France | Poland. |
| S.C. | Paris | Jan. 24 to 30 | Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Japan. | Disarmament. Reparation. Austria. Near East. |
| S.C. | London | Feb. 21 to Mar. 14 | Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Japan, Greece, Turkey, Germany. | Reparation (penalties imposed). Near East. |
| S.C. | London | Apr. 30 to May 5 | Britain, France, Italy, Belgium | Reparation (terms settled). |
| | Paris | June 19 | Britain (Lord Curzon), France, Italy. | Near East. |
| S.C. | Paris | Aug. 8 to 11 | Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, Japan. | Upper Silesia (matter referred to League of Nations). |
| 1922. | London | Dec. 18 to 22 | Britain, France | Economic restoration. |
| S.C. | Cannes | Jan. 6 to 12 | Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Japan. | Economic restoration (Conference of all European States to be convened, including Germany and Bolshevist Russia). Anglo-French Treaty or "Pact." |
| | Boulogne | Feb. 25 | Britain, France | Conditions of Genoa (Pan-European) Conference. |
| | Paris | Mar. 22 to 27 | Britain (Lord Curzon), France, Italy. | Revision of Treaty of Sèvres. |

S.C. = Meeting of the Supreme Council.

2.

The principal matters discussed are seen to have been the Fiume, or Adriatic, question : the non-fulfilment by Germany of the Treaty terms in regard to disarmament and reparation : the Greco-Turkish peace : and throughout, though not specifically mentioned, the economic rehabilitation of Europe and the attitude to be adopted towards Sovietist Russia, which became the theme of a Pan-European Economic Conference held at Genoa in April and May 1922.

The Adriatic difficulty afforded a typical clash-point between the new diplomacy and the old. Already during the Paris Congress it had brought about a deadlock, and the Italian delegates had actually betaken themselves to Rome—without, however, causing that breakdown in the proceedings at Paris which they seemed to expect. By the Treaty of London (see Part II., Chapter VIII.) territory on the eastern Adriatic had been awarded to Italy, although more than 90 per cent. of its inhabitants were Southern Slavs. This disposition obviously contradicted the principle of President Wilson that a "readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly-recognisable lines of nationality"—No. 9 of those fourteen points which Italy, with the other Principal Allied Powers, had accepted as the basis of peace. The American President argued that circumstances had changed to such an extent since the signature of the London Treaty that its terms were no longer applicable ; but so little did Signor Orlando and his colleagues accept this reasoning that they actually claimed Fiume over and above what the Treaty awarded them. Fiume was the only Adriatic port with good railway connection to the Slav hinterland, the remaining harbours southward being separated from the interior by a chain of rugged mountains. But the issue was not an absolutely clear one between the ethnographic principle and the stipulations of a race-bartering treaty ; for the town of Fiume itself was Italian.

In parts of Transylvania there exist villages where, for more than five centuries, settlements of Germans have lived side by side with, but clearly sundered from, the native Rumanes, huckstered with them, drawn their water from the same well, and ploughed adjoining fields, but never mingling in work or in play, and never intermarrying. A somewhat similar state of affairs existed at Fiume: it was an Italian settlement surrounded by Slavs: a narrow rivulet, the Retchina, alone divided it from the suburb of Shushak, inhabited solely by Yugo-Slavs. Italy, therefore, put forward an ethnic claim to Fiume, and occupied the town. This occupation was transformed in September 1919 into an "irrevocable annexation" by the poet-patriot d'Annunzio, who thus constituted himself a nominal rebel against his own Government, and defied the decrees of Europe's areopagus.

The Central Allied executive power, being transferred to the hands of the Supreme Council, only in fact existed as often as Conferences were convened. In the intervals authority was held to reside in a Council of the Ambassadorial representatives in Paris of the principal Allied Powers. The affairs of Europe, in so far as they were controlled at all, may be said to have been settled by Britain and France, with Italy and Belgium playing useful but secondary parts, and Japan an interested observer. America, after the fall of Mr Wilson from power in March 1921, withdrew from participation in the settlement of European questions, although she continued for two years to render incalculable services in the distribution of relief-supplies.

Mr Lloyd-George was at first debarred from playing his proper role of intermediary between the old diplomacy and the new by the definite engagement of Britain to the Italian solution of the Adriatic question. But as soon as Italy began to show a disposition to concede the Slav coastal territory he put forward, at the first meeting of the Supreme Council (January 1920), a solution known as the "January

Compromise." According to the British proposal, to which France adhered, the territory immediately west of Fiume was to be divided in a manner which favoured Italy more than President Wilson desired, less than the London Treaty prescribed. The town itself was to be administered by the League of Nations.

Clinging obstinately, even when prostrated on a sick-bed, to his own solution, President Wilson despatched to Europe a protest against the suggested settlement, which also did not satisfy the Yugo-Slavs. At the meeting of the Supreme Council at San Remo, therefore, the matter was left to be decided by Italians and Yugo-Slavs themselves at a joint Conference. The accession to power in Rome of the anti-Nationalist Giolitti made a solution easier; and in November 1920 the Treaty of Rapallo was signed, which in Istria was rather more favourable to Italy than Mr Lloyd-George's proposed Compromise, but left to Yugo-Slavia the Dalmatian coast-line (except Zara), and made an "independent State" of the town of Fiume (see p. 235).

3.

The disarmament of Germany was not a prominent matter of discussion until the Spa Conference (July 1920). According to the Versailles Treaty the armaments of Germany had been reduced to the strictest limits, "in order to render possible the initiation of a general limitation." Serious discrepancies were soon visible as to the amount of war-material destroyed in the estimates of the inter-Allied Commission of Control and of the German Government. At Spa Mr Lloyd-George associated himself with France in insisting upon a more effective observance of the Treaty stipulations in regard to the surrender of arms by private citizens, and other points: especial injunctions were laid upon Germany to disarm certain semi-military bodies, such as the Einwohnerwehr, which had been maintained on the pretext of suppressing civil disorders. Disarmament has not since

been a question of serious diplomatic dispute. Salutary as it must have been to German ears and German eyes to hear many thousands of field-pieces blown up, and to gaze, as at Danzig, upon rows of truncated submarines, it is still doubtful whether their total effectives have been reduced to 100,000 men, or the manufacture of arms strictly confined to those factories which have been "communicated to and approved of by" the Allied Powers.

The amount of reparation, and the method of its payment, was delegated by the Versailles Treaty to a special Reparation Commission, which was to draw up a schedule prescribing a method whereby Germany should discharge the whole of her debt within a period of thirty years from 1st May 1921. Considerable latitude was permitted to the Commission. It might extend the date limit, modify, from time to time, the form of payment, and even reduce the total amount if the "specific authority of the several Governments represented upon the Commission were obtained." It is to be observed, therefore, that the phrase much employed by successive French Governments since 1919—"the integral execution of the Treaty"—is hardly applicable to reparation, since the treaty-makers specifically devolved their authority upon the Reparation Commission, which can make and modify its arrangements almost *ad libitum*.

French Ministries have drawn up their Budgets in expectation of large sums from Germany which have never arrived. The British Treasury, with a truer recognition of realities, has abstained from reckoning upon income from this source. In the event, total German payments to date (April 1922) have approximately covered the cost of the Allied armies of occupation; and American claims on this head have still to be met.

Certain specific coal deliveries, however, were enjoined upon Germany by the Versailles Treaty, amounting, approximately, to 3,400,000 tons per month. This amount Germany—and with excuse—

failed to deliver; and her failure brought about a sharp discussion between Britain and France at Spa (July 1920). It should be mentioned that earlier in the year France had shown the strongest determination to prevent Germany from evading any of the conditions of the Treaty; and over the question of the trial of war-criminals and reduction of forces had occupied Frankfort, Darmstadt, and other towns on the east side of the Rhine. She had only perfunctorily acquainted Britain with her intention; and the matter had caused a good deal of surprise and irritation on this side of the Channel.

At the Spa meeting, the first to which Germany was invited to send delegates, an accommodation was reached between Britain, France, and Germany according to which 2,000,000 tons of coal were to be called for monthly, and for the next six months the Allies were to pay Germany a special money allowance wherewith to supply her ill-nourished miners with food. A sharp divergence then arose between Mr Lloyd-George and M. Millerand, the French Prime Minister, over the rate at which coal so delivered should be valued in the reparation accounts. According to Annex V. Claim 6 of the Reparation Section of the Treaty, the price was to be the German pithead price plus the freight to the French frontier, "provided that the pithead price does not exceed the pithead price of British coal for export." So far from exceeding the British price, as foreseen in the Treaty, the German price was lower; and coal from the Rhineland would therefore undersell British coal in the French market. Mr Lloyd-George manœuvred M. Millerand into consenting to an addition of approximately 150 per cent. to the price of German coal sold to France. It was clever, but ungenerous and impolitic bargaining. France—and Italy too—were in almost desperate need of coal at the time, and the British price, which the Prime Minister thus artificially attempted to maintain, was abnormally high, almost, indeed, prohibitive to impoverished and coal-less Italy. France, with the

greater part of her collieries in the Nord and Pas de Calais wilfully ruined by the invaders, expected to obtain cheap coal from Germany; this legitimate expectation was hindered by the Spa arrangement. M. Millerand had to make an embarrassed defence against bitter attacks in the Paris Chamber, in which he complained of the "unyielding will" of his ally. The shipping in which Germany paid much of her reparation to Britain was reckoned, in French eyes, at an extremely low price; just before his interview with M. Millerand, Mr Lloyd-George had had a long and apparently friendly talk with Herr von Simons, the principal German delegate; these facts combined to exasperate French feeling, and intensify the distrust with which Mr Lloyd-George has come to be regarded by our neighbours. Moreover, the Prime Minister's adroitness did not even succeed in its immediate object; for the production of French and Belgian mines increased enormously soon afterwards, and being accompanied by a depression in the iron and steel trades, coal soon became abundant and cheaper on the Continent, and British owners were forced to lower their prices—to the great benefit of the British public.[4]

The Reparation question has displayed, at every stage, a lack of considered policy on the part of Britain. Before the Paris Conference of January to February 1921, the Prime Minister inclined to the opinion that Germany was unable to pay anything worth the cost of collecting. By the time the next Conference was held, only one month later, in London, he had veered to the view consistently held by France that Germany was able to pay, was wilfully defying the Allies, and should be penalised. At Paris, in February 1921, he agreed with M. Briand, the French Prime Minister, that Germany was to pay forty-two annual instalments, which were to begin at £150,000,000, and rise, in 1932, to £300,000,000—a total sum whose ultimate (not immediate) value was £11,500,000,000. In addition there was to be paid to the Allies a sum of 12½ per cent.

on all exports from Germany. When the Germans refused these terms at the London Conference, held in March, sanctions were enforced, whose legality, under the Treaty terms, was at least open to doubt. The penalties were supplemented by a wholly unscientific attempt to raise money from Germany by making British purchasers of German goods pay half the price into the Treasury—the German seller then recovering his missing moiety from his own Government. This expedient, embodied in a Bill which was rushed through the House of Commons under the impetuous direction of the Prime Minister himself, proved useless for its purpose.

By the time the Supreme Council met again, in May 1921, the experts had so modified their estimate of the payment which Germany was capable of making that the sum demanded amounted only to £6,600,000,000, which was 4700 million pounds sterling less than the total determined upon three months before. This decision was accepted by Germany under threat of further occupation of territory: and under Dr Wirth a Government was at last formed at Berlin which showed an apparently genuine desire to meet its financial obligations. The Allied sanctions were removed later in the year. Germany is under obligation to pay two milliard gold marks (something over £100,000,000) annually, plus the proceeds of a 25 per cent. duty on German exports secured on bills of exchange of gold value. In substitution of money, payment may be made in kind (*i.e.*, coal, aniline dyes, timber, etc.). The settlement provides for the delivery of Bonds by Germany: and for the establishment in Berlin of an Allied Committee of Guarantees. Only in 1922 does the Reparation Commission seem to have appreciated the right conferred upon it by Clause 12 (*b*) Annex II. of the Reparation Chapter to satisfying itself that the German scheme of taxation "is fully as heavy proportionately as that of any of the Powers represented on the Commission." It has long been the obvious

device of the German Government to encourage at once individual prosperity and State impoverishment.

But Allied statesmanship has hitherto failed finally to determine the sum which Germany is capable of paying, to set time-limits for the payment of successive instalments, or to announce appropriate penalties which should automatically follow default. Germany has neither been mulcted, nor has she been rehabilitated.

4.

The Treaty of Sèvres (10th August 1920) failed in its purpose of restoring peace between Greece and Turkey—indeed its terms, so soon as they became known, in May, three months before the signature of the Treaty, immediately caused a recrudescence of fighting. A separate Turkish Government was set up in Asia Minor by Mustapha Kemal, with its Capital at Angora. His rebel armies attacked the French in Cilicia and the Greeks in Anatolia; and his defiance has succeeded in obtaining the withdrawal of the French from the Cilician territory entrusted to them in mandate, the conclusion of a separate compact with the French Government (and possibly also with Italy), and a revision of the Treaty of Sèvres.

That treaty may be said to have sanctioned the Greek view that the proper sphere of Greece is the Ægean Sea and its surrounding coasts, which are inhabited almost throughout by an Hellenic fringe. The coasting trade is in the hands of Greeks; the islands of the Ægean, the Macedonian coast, the Gallipoli Peninsula, Constantinople, and the Asiatic littoral are linked to Greece by a numerous fleet of merchant vessels whose home-harbour is Athens. From being the carriers of the Ægean the Greeks aspired, after the war, to become the representatives of Western civilisation in Asia Minor, and to be

masters of its great port, Smyrna, and the adjacent hinterland, Ionia. The fulfilment of this last ambition was put within their grasp by the Treaty. Ionia was

TREATY OF SÈVRES, 10TH AUGUST 1920 (superseded later).

to be administered by them for five years, at the end of which it might annex itself to Greece by plebiscite. Thrace was ceded to Greece, whose territory thus extended along the whole Northern Ægean to the Black Sea and the Marmara.

In June 1920, Mr Lloyd-George and M. Millerand

met the other members of the Supreme Council at Boulogne, and decided to entrust the Greek army with the duty of enforcing the evacuation of Thrace and of the country surrounding Smyrna by the Turks. It is a singular example of the informality of Mr Lloyd-George's diplomatic methods that it was originally intended that no Italian representative should be present at this meeting, although Italy has more direct interests in the Ægean than either Britain or France and is Greece's nearest rival in those waters. When the Conference was made a general one at the special request of Italy, the British and French Premiers hastily organised a preliminary meeting at Hythe (20th June) to which M. Venizelos, the Greek representative, was invited.

The Greek army accomplished the European part of its allotted task with success, and occupied Eastern Thrace; but the resistance of the Turks in Asia Minor, to whom the idea of subordination to their former helots is unpalatable, has been beyond the power of Greece to overcome. Her position was weakened by the result of a general election held later in that year (1920), which drove M. Venizelos from power, and recalled King Constantine to the throne vacated by the accidental death of his younger son. The differences between this monarch and the great statesman, who had in ten years raised the international position of Greece in a manner challenging comparison with the work of Bismarck or Cavour, were so personal and so bitter as to make collaboration impossible. M. Venizelos left the country; and the war-record of King Constantine made the Allies unwilling to support him. The French Government, indeed, desired to prevent his return to Greece; Mr Lloyd-George is believed to have used all his influence to allow Greece a free hand in the matter. His wiser counsel prevailed; but the Allies neither recognised King Constantine officially, nor did they extend to him the financial assistance always generously accorded to M. Venizelos.

The Powers thus having come to the conclusion that Greece was no longer capable of efficiently championing Western civilisation in Asia Minor, a revision of the Treaty of Sèvres became imperative. Its modification had long been advocated by France and Italy, who both accorded embarrassingly strong sympathy to the Nationalist Turkish Government of Angora; and it was also demanded by the Moslems of India. Yielding to circumstances, Mr Lloyd-George sent Lord Curzon to Paris, where proposals for the revision of the Treaty were discussed with M. Poincaré, the French Prime and Foreign Minister, and Signor Schanzer, the Italian Foreign Secretary (March 1922). According to their decisions, which were admirably expounded in a public communication in Paris and vindicated on his return in the House of Lords by Lord Curzon, the easternmost portion of Thrace, that which abuts on the Black Sea, was withdrawn from Greece, and restored to Turkey—who thus finds herself once more in direct contact with Bulgaria: the Smyrna enclave was to be evacuated by Greece: unimpaired Turkish sovereignty to be restored there, as also in Constantinople, whence Allied control was to be removed: the Allied troops, however, were to be left in occupation of Gallipoli, and the Asiatic coasts of both the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus were to be demilitarised, in order that Turkey might not be able, as in 1914, forcibly to close the approaches to Constantinople.

It is permissible to doubt whether the credit of Western diplomacy stands sufficiently high in the esteem of turbulent Anatolians for its decisions to be effective unless they be attended by corresponding action.

5.

In the Greco-Turkish dispute France made close co-operation difficult for us by the warmth with which she espoused the cause of Turkey, before a peace with

our former enemy has been ratified. In the matter of Bolshevist Russia France may retort that the British Prime Minister's attitude has made close co-operation impossible.

Frenchmen were Russia's greatest foreign creditors in the war, and therefore the Soviet's repudiation of pre-war debts has been more keenly felt in France than in Britain. But such a repudiation undermines the basis on which economic dealings are conducted between separate countries; that, and the inability of foreigners to obtain impartial justice in Soviet Courts of Law might have been considered sufficient reasons for the British Government to unite with France in refusing to enter into trade relations with the Russian Government. They have seemed sufficient to America. But the Prime Minister of the British Empire has thought it to his interest and compatible with his high position to treat with the Soviet as with an equal; and by the great weight of his reputation Mr Lloyd-George, whose sympathy has been exploited throughout Russia, has probably done more than any other man outside Russia to keep Lenin and Trotzky in power.

Despatched into Russia during the war in a locked train by the Germans, in the same way as they sent poisonous bacilli into Roumania in the privileged recess of a diplomatic bag, Lenin made himself master of Russia by the deliberate destruction of its existing institutions, the openly advocated extermination of its aristocracy and middle classes, the confiscation of their belongings, the brutal assassination of the interned Tsar and all his family, and the judicial murder before the Cheka of all, in whatever stratum of society, who opposed him. These crimes were committed against a Russia which had, under Kerensky, adopted a Constitution moulded upon those of the Western Powers, the establishment of which was in many countries corollary to the victory of the Allies. Russia of the Constituent Assembly, therefore, had a direct claim upon British sympathies. The despotism of Lenin and Trotzky, on the other hand, manifested a

special hostility to Britain. They made an armed attack upon the British Embassy in Petrograd. They imprisoned Mr Lockhart, an official British envoy, and locked up the Consular Staff. They murdered Captain Cromie, the representative of the British navy. They attacked our institutions, through their secret agents, in all parts of the world. There was a day when these monstrous offences against international comity, these outrages inflicted upon British officials would have led to an instant demand for reparation, followed by a summary rupture of relations. But Mr Lloyd-George was the first of Europe's leaders to introduce an envoy of this clique of usurpers, masquerading as a government, into official relationship. He invited M. Krassin, as a member of the Co-operative Societies, to come to London to negotiate a Trade Agreement, knowing well that he was nothing else but a representative of the Soviet. To style him a member of the Co-operatives was perhaps designed to render him palatable to the Prime Minister's Conservative supporters, who formed a majority in the House of Commons. To institute the negotiations, on the other hand, was a bid for the support of the Labour Party, who at that time, lured by the democratic catchwords which poured from the Soviet leaders' lips, and totally misinformed as to the true state of affairs in Russia, expressed considerable sympathy for Bolshevism. In his eagerness to secure their votes, Mr Lloyd-George made no attempt to enlighten them. Their argument that the cloud of unemployment which loomed black on the industrial horizon would be dispelled by opening trade with Russia would not bear investigation. Even when she prospered and possessed her larger pre-war dimensions, Russia took approximately 3 per cent. of British exports. It was open for private merchants, if they wished, to trade with Russia; but every well-informed person realised that commerce would be unprofitable, if not impossible with an abnormal Russia, whose principle of government was confiscation, and whose methods had reduced the productive capacity of the

country almost to zero. The means of transport had collapsed: the substitution of forced labour for the willing activity of self-interested producers had brought industrial stagnation: the seizure of the peasants' crops had reduced the production of each to the satisfaction of his own needs: provinces which used to be the granaries of Continental Europe were taught the meaning of famine: from a chaos of starvation, disease, and impoverishment the only commodities which the Bolsheviks could find for export was gold, whose origin rendered it of doubtful legal validity, and such goods as furs and jewels, which, when offered in the open market proved to be in the one case stolen from foreign companies, and in the other from the bodies of the rich whom they had murdered, or from the aristocracy of Roumania, who, during their country's peril in the war had entrusted them to the care of the Tsarist ally.

With these international anarchists, then, Mr Lloyd-George, against the will of several members of his Cabinet, concluded a Trade Agreement on 16th March 1921. In its preamble the Soviet Government expressly bound itself to abstain from propaganda or other action inimical to Britain in Persia, Afghanistan, and India; while the British Government bound itself to abstain from activities hostile to the Bolsheviks in the new independent States that were formerly a part of the Russian Empire. Britain has kept her ignominious promise; she has not supported the States of the Baltic, Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in their plucky stand against Soviet principles, wherewith Russia sought to condition the national independence in which she acquiesced. On the other hand the Soviet Government, if an institution which neither trusts nor is trusted by its own agents, and which is accepted by only one two-hundred-and-fortieth of its population[5] can be called by such a name, made no attempt to keep its pledge. Within six months Lord Curzon had formally to complain of hostile action by Bolshevist Russia against British interests in Afghanistan and

India; and in his Note on the subject he showed that charges could be brought of anti-British intrigues by Soviet agents in Persia, and with the Nationalist Turks of Angora.

Bolshevism has constituted itself the enemy of the British Empire, and its activities have been detected in Canada, in South Africa, and in places which are nearer home. On 6th May 1921, two months, that is, after the conclusion of the Treaty, Lord Curzon stated in the Albert Hall that Bolshevist money was "simply pouring" into this country for the purpose of fomenting revolution and class strife. Other members of Mr Lloyd-George's Government have been still more emphatic in their denunciation, and have described the Bolsheviks as a "band of conspirators eager to spread their poisonous influence throughout the world." Their hostility primarily, perhaps, denotes an extension of the "secular antagonism" between Europe and Asia which in the world-war had banded whatever was Asiatic in Europe against the culture of the West—Russia, compound of both, having inclined first to one side and then to the other.

6.

At the Cannes meeting of the Supreme Council, nonetheless (Jan. 1922), it was decided, at the instigation of the British Prime Minister, to convene an "International Economic Conference" at Genoa to devise means for the reconstruction of Europe with the help of hostile Russia. The conditions attached to the invitation were not categorically accepted by the Soviet leaders; but their delegation was none the less made welcome at Genoa, and soon became its central feature to a public curious to see how a body of cranks, charlatans, fanatics, and political murderers would comport themselves in a European assemblage.

The Conference opened on 10th April and lasted for six weeks, without achieving its purpose. At a

preliminary meeting at Boulogne on 25th February M. Poincaré, the French Prime Minister, had posed the condition to Mr Lloyd-George that the question of German reparation should not come up for discussion. There was also a clear understanding that no feature of the Versailles Treaty should be called in question. Reparation and the cancellation of international debts, which, in the absence of America, was also excluded from debate, are matters inextricable from the economic situation of Europe; so the Conference began with a heavy handicap. And its progress was impeded by confusion of issues, wilfully increased by the Bolsheviks. In the "outline agenda" the "establishment of European peace on a firm basis" was an item (Clause 2); and evidently almost any question might be broached under this head. Mr Lloyd-George was known to cherish the ambition of persuading the assembled nations to sign a "non-aggression pact," whereby they should undertake to abstain from attacking one another for ten years. He was soon speaking of this as the "main purpose"[6] of the Conference. Its avowedly economic character was further distorted by the Bolsheviks, who made it clear that their main objects were to obtain *de jure* recognition of, and the grant of large credits to, the Soviet Government. Another confusion of ideas became evident when the Allied Memorandum of 3rd May was presented to the Bolshevist delegation. It had been laid down at the outset that all nations were to be treated on a footing of absolute equality. Yet Clauses 6 and 7 of the 3rd May Note were designed to give a preferential position to foreign over native traders in Russia, and by the erection of Arbitration Commissions, on which foreign members should sit, to establish a system analogous to that of the Great Powers for safeguarding the interests of their nationals in Turkey or in Egypt. This is very likely the best way to ensure justice to foreigners trading in Russia; but it was not difficult for the Sovietists to point out the contradiction between the terms on which they had been

welcomed in Mr Lloyd-George's opening speech and the conditions to which they were then asked to subscribe. By methods which were stigmatised by the Prime Minister's private secretary as "oriental," the Bolshevist delegates attempted to drive a wedge between Britain and France, and they succeeded to the extent that France, with Belgium, dissociated herself from the principal Memorandum which the other Powers presented to the Bolsheviks, on the ground that it involved recognition of confiscation and the abandonment of the principle of private property.

There is more than a grain of truth in the witticism that "Conferences only succeed when their results are arranged beforehand." Nor will a precise objective, limited agenda, and an attendance strictly limited to those who are interested in the question actually being discussed ensure success, unless the procedure be carefully prescribed. When the Financial Commission at Genoa met to discuss the stabilisation of currencies, 250 delegates forced their way into the room. A sub-Commission "No. 1" was formed for the transaction of the most important political business on which Germany was represented. But for ten days it was given no business to perform. The work was done in conversations between the principal Allied representatives meeting at Mr Lloyd-George's villa, to which, moreover, the Soviet leaders were occasionally invited. Germany, feeling isolated and ignored, decided to assert herself by choosing this moment to sign with the Bolsheviks a treaty, mainly economic in purport, but providing also for the resumption of diplomatic relations between the Reich and the "Federal Republic."

This mischievous compact was one of the few positive results of the Genoa Conference. The Financial Commission made an arrangement for the "initiation of reforms at a meeting of Central Banks"; and passed a series of academic resolutions, such as the recommendation of gold as the only possible monetary standard for Europe, which might have been reached

at any time during the last three years in any Capital of Europe where a few experts came together. To the Conference's achievements must also be added a non-aggression truce of a few months' duration, to which no country was willing to appose its signature, but to which the delegates, with the salient exception of the French, the Belgians, and the Germans, swore with uplifted hand. The main business was deferred to another Conference to be held at the Hague.

The Prime Minister, indeed, in his speech to the House of Commons after his return (25th May), claimed as a notable achievement that the Conference had actually met and had not broken down. "There were nations at that table," he said, "hardly on speaking terms with one another. There had been feuds and misunderstandings between them, prolonged up to the very hour of the Conference. We met in perfect calm, in perfect harmony." It is true that the delegates did not come to blows; it is equally true that there was discord between several States, openly expressed; and time will show whether the feuds between Poles and Russians, Magyars and Rumanes, and others, have been one whit abated by the theatrical humbug of the Genoa peace-vows. Being driven to rely, however, upon rhetoric rather than performance to justify his diplomacy, Mr Lloyd-George declared that "we had there assembled probably the largest gathering of nations that ever met in the history of this world" (the total number being thirty-four). There were forty-five Sovereign States alone at the Congress of Vienna; and the persons attending the Council of Constance were numbered in thousands, not in hundreds as at Genoa. But we need not pursue our investigations in world-history further back than to the last meeting of the League of Nations to instance a gathering of forty-five nations.

Perhaps the most real result of the Genoa Conference was to exhibit the incompatibility between Bolshevism and civilisation, and to mark the limits beyond which a policy of conciliation becomes propitiation of enemies

by the sacrifice of national honour or principles. It has ever been Mr Lloyd-George's practice to propitiate political opponents, even to the extent of offering them place or title. Applied to international affairs the principle of propitiation has received peculiar support from the general public owing to the natural craving for peace which follows a great war. But conciliation and co-operation are stretched too far when they are made to include the champions of doctrines abhorrent and pernicious to the people of this country. The Bolsheviks advocate political and economic methods opposed to those which this country stands for, and have deliberately constituted themselves, in practice as well as in theory, the enemies of the British Empire. "Our foreign policy," said Sir E. Grey at a meeting of the Imperial Press Conference on 7th June 1909, "is . . . to uphold in diplomacy the ideals which we prize at home." This salutary rule, which prevents a country from failing those who trust it, Mr Lloyd-George has renounced. He has courted the enemies of the country, and won a tribute from Lenin for his "absence of political snobbishness," which to others appears rather absence of political morality.

By being worthier champions of the principles which we prize, we might very well have caused by now Russia's capitulation to the methods of civilisation. She already made in 1921 a first concession to common-sense (and to British principles) when she restored to her subjects the right to trade privately. She is in desperate need of capital. We have capital, and in addition the machinery and the organising ability without which she cannot recover economic stability. No country has ever opposed us and prospered, when our cause has been a good one.

On the other hand we might well have practised the principle of conciliation more determinedly towards Germany, whose canons of government are analogous to ours, and whose economic stability is far more important to Europe than Russia's. Russia can only work out her salvation by first laboriously re-creating

her agricultural wealth; German industry is a basis on which we can count. Germany was temporarily lost to the cause of European reconstruction by the clumsy diplomacy of Genoa. That unwieldy and ill-organised assembly manifested all the disadvantages of diplomacy by conference. Impartial observers are divided as to whether its general effect upon Europe was disintegrating or consolidating. Not a few Minor States went away aggrieved and resentful. Most of the important matters had perforce to be discussed without them; for an international Conference stresses vividly the dominance of the greater Powers. And the presentation of Britain's case by the head of the Government brought fundamental questions into the foreground, which need never have arisen if the Conference had been conducted by appropriate experts. The maintenance of the Entente Cordiale was mentioned in conversation between Mr Lloyd-George and M. Barthou, the French delegate, M. Poincaré having refused to attend in person. The threat of its discontinuance may never have been uttered; but it is worthy of note that with none but the Prime Minister would it have been a possibility that the present basis of our Continental policy should be made a matter of conversational negotiation. Mr Lloyd-George's diplomatic activity has more than once pointed Talleyrand's famous advice to a young diplomatist, "*Sourtout pas de zèle.*"

## 7.

Diplomacy, after all, is the business of diplomatists: they are the proper executants of a policy which the home Government shall have determined. And while it is their particular duty to dispense abroad the prescriptions of the Foreign Office, the Prime Minister's "most important function" has been defined as that of being the "supreme co-ordinating authority"[7] at home, and there to superintend the affairs of a vast Empire: not to transact negotiations in various foreign

places. Lord Beaconsfield discovered the inconvenience of neglecting his work at home when he went to Berlin in 1878.[8] M. Poincaré has pointed it out in our own day. Referring to the inter-Allied Conferences he wrote: "The heads of the various Governments were generally forced to lose contact with their respective Cabinets, with their Parliaments, and with their nations at a time when a multitude of vital problems, demanding urgent attention, arose among the victorious as well as among the vanquished nations. . . . The members of the Supreme Council became more and more isolated in accomplishing their gigantic task, and their countries, left to themselves, began to feel that they were no longer being governed."[9] Apologists of diplomacy by conference have spoken as though it were a post-war invention, of which Mr Lloyd-George alone was qualified to make proper use. It is claimed that he possesses a singular talent for relieving a tense situation by a flash of wit or an apt joke, which produces the unanimity of general laughter. It is argued that the method gives "elasticity of procedure, small numbers, informality, mutual acquaintance, and if possible, personal friendship among the principals."[10] To meet, to gauge the personality of rival or allied statesmen is certainly advantageous; but personal contact having been established, the regular work should be conducted by the agents who are paid for the purpose, and lodged at the expense of the public in Legations and Embassies in every country in the world. An ambassador may cultivate the friendship of the principal personages in the State to which he is accredited, while his chief at home is keeping in touch with his public opinion, and considering the fundamental facts of the situation. The actual negotiator must perforce contentrate on details, and this is the task of the diplomatist. Yet Mr Lloyd-George, animated apparently by a positive dislike of Foreign Office officials and professional diplomatists, has taken into his own hands delicate work for which a life's training is no sure guarantee of success, and

for which sciolism is an almost certain presage of failure. He has invited foreign ambassadors to his breakfast-table, and taken important verbal decisions, of which the envoy, proceeding later to the Foreign Office, finds the titular director of our foreign policy quite ignorant. On one occasion, at least (15th October 1919), the Foreign Office has been about to issue a *démenti* of information which has appeared in the newspapers, but which a little hurried investigation has shown to be an unreported decision of the Supreme Council. At one period the Prime Minister's Private Secretary was in a position to take decisions over the head of the Foreign Office.

To ignore or to flout the Department which is nominally responsible for foreign relations is to drive it into inefficiency, and to give it a name for untrustworthiness among the diplomatists of foreign countries. Its reputation was very different when, under Mr Balfour and Mr Asquith, Lord Lansdowne and Sir Edward Grey discharged its functions in a position of real responsibility, of superintended liberty. It alone can formulate foreign policy uninfluenced by electoral considerations. The informal methods and disjointed control introduced by Mr Lloyd-George have led to distrust in France, vacillation in Poland, discredit in Persia, and decrease of British influence and prestige in Asia Minor and the Far East. Verbal engagements have been lightly made, and as lightly forsaken. On matters requiring careful consideration oral contracts have been hastily concluded, and left unfulfilled. Words are the coins of diplomacy; and recent transactions have debased the currency.

8.

It has been a misfortune for the country that Sir Edward Grey learned his diplomacy in peace, and had to apply it in war; and Mr Lloyd-George learned it in war and has continued to practise it in peace-time. "I want no diplomats," exclaimed Mr Lloyd-George

in 1917 to Prince Sixte of Bourbon, during the negotiations for detaching Austria from her allies in mid-war, "diplomats were invented simply to waste time. . . . It is simply a waste of time to let so important a matter be discussed by men who are not authorised to speak for their countries."[11] The slow methods of formal diplomacy are unsuitable to war-conditions, and the exclamation was perfectly intelligible. But in a state of peace a trusted plenipotentiary, properly supported from home, can quite well take important decisions in his country's interest. Many instances may be found by a short study of work done by Lord Clarendon in Paris, Sir Harry Parkes in China, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe in Constantinople, Lord Carnock in Tangier, Lord Hardinge of Penshurst in Petrograd. In the new conditions of world-communication, when an American statesman can make the journey to London more quickly and safely than a northern Scotch member when first his Parliament was united to that of England, it will probably be found convenient to hold conferences, with specific objectives, more frequently than in the past. But the officials whose attendance seems most appropriate, if the discussion be concerned with foreign policy, are the Foreign Secretary, or the nearest resident Ambassador; or in some cases a special Ambassador. In this capacity Mr A. J. Balfour was eminently successful at the recent carefully organised and ably-conducted Conference in Washington, at which he was supported by the resident Ambassador.

Mr Balfour, who was created a Knight of the Garter and an earl on the conclusion of the mission to Washington, began his career in the Foreign Office as Private Secretary to his uncle, Lord Salisbury. He attended with him the Berlin Congress of 1878. He has probably, in the course of his long life, had more influence on our external relations than anyone except an actual Foreign Secretary; for, like Cyrano de Bergerac, he has often been *celui qui souffle et qu'on oublie.* It seems a pity that he has not been

more directly concerned with them; for he has the essential qualities of a diplomatist. He is conciliatory, and firm; he eludes difficulties which cannot immediately be overcome only to obviate them in more favourable conditions; he is courteous and unhurried; he easily detects insincerity, not always discernible to those who are themselves sincere; he has a penetrating intellect and a very subtle mind, combined with a keen sense of honour. He has an intuitive sense of fitness; and is, indeed, almost as adaptable as Mr Lloyd-George himself. He is at home in any society, and has adorned an unusual variety of political, social, literary, and academic posts. He has been equally effective in the chanceries of the old diplomacy or on the platforms of the new. He responds to environment. But his character has a moral quality which invites the best and expunges the worst influences, like a highly sensitised plate that receives light-marks but is unaffected by blackness; whereas Mr Lloyd-George's plasticity is affected by every sort of influence that plays upon it.

The Washington Conference was convened by the United States Government for the main purposes of coming to an agreement with the Japanese Government in regard to their respective interests in the Pacific Ocean, and with all the leading maritime Powers in regard to the limitation of naval armaments. The Conference was opened by the American Secretary of State, Mr Hughes, on 12th November 1921, in a speech which Mr Balfour, speaking immediately afterwards, greeted as an historic event. "The time has come," the American statesman said, "not for general resolutions or mutual advice, but for action"—and he forthwith unrolled a scheme for the self-imposition by the Powers concerned—the United States of America, Britain, Japan, France, and Italy—of a specific ratio and maximum tonnage for their navies: and for ten years there was to be no further construction of capital ships, which were accepted as the index of relative strength. Mr Balfour showed initiative and statesman-

ship in making it clear, from the moment Mr Hughes' proposal was unfolded, that Britain accepted it in principle. He made neither conditions nor reservations, except such as ordinary prudence in the lack of detailed information made inevitable; and the bargaining spirit which France and Japan brought into the subsequent discussions was entirely absent from his methods. As far as Britain was concerned, work at the Assembly resolved itself into the settlement of very intricate technical details; and when the draft of the Naval Treaty was drawn up, after three months' arduous labour, the ratio of strengths as between the five Powers was as originally proposed by Mr Hughes —525,000 tons for America and the British Empire; 315,000 tons for Japan; 175,000 tons for France and Italy. The Treaty further stipulated that no further naval bases or fortifications should be built in the insular Pacific possessions of America, Japan, or Britain, but—and here the unwisdom of a rigid *status quo* ordinance was recognised—if the "requirements of the national security of any Contracting Power . . . are materially affected by any change of circumstances," the Powers should assemble at once to consider possible amendments to the Treaty. In the event of war a Contracting Power might suspend its obligations by giving notice to the other signatories. The Treaty was to be valid for fifteen years (until 1936).

In all, five Treaties were negotiated in Washington, of which the two next in importance were the Pacific Agreement, and the Treaty respecting China. The Four-Power Pacific Agreement (United States, Britain, Japan, and France) laid down that in case of a dispute over any Pacific question which could not be settled by the ordinary diplomatic means, a Conference of the Four Powers should be convened: if any of the signatories' rights should be threatened by any other Power they were to "communicate with one another fully and frankly" in order to arrive at an understanding: the Treaty to remain in force ten years.

The "Far Eastern Treaty" provided for the

"administrative integrity" of China, and the "equality of opportunity" of all Powers having commercial intercourse with that country. The signatories, United States of America, Britain, France, Japan, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal (and China), undertook to "refrain from taking advantage of conditions in China to seek special rights or privileges which would abridge the rights of subjects or citizens of friendly States": not to allow any of their nationals to acquire "spheres of influence": and China undertook not to "exercise or permit unfair discrimination" on her railways. It may be interpolated that such of these railways as have been built by British capital were built as Chinese Government railways, and in the scramble for concessions which began in the nineties of last century Britain thus refrained from impinging on Chinese sovereignty.

By a special agreement with Japan, which Mr Balfour's conciliatory diplomacy contributed to bring about, China accepted a solution of the Shantung problem, whereby she may redeem the railways controlled by Japan in the next five years, and thus eliminate Japanese authority altogether from the peninsula. As a corollary, Britain has agreed to restore to China the lease of Wei-hai-Wei.

Finally, we may mention the "Treaty to protect neutrals and non-combatants at sea in time of war" by making it obligatory on all war vessels to attend to the safety of crew or passengers of any merchant vessel which, after search, it was intended to destroy: by prohibiting altogether the use of submarines as commerce-destroyers: and by abstaining from the use of asphyxiating gases or "analogous liquids, materials or devices." This Treaty was signed by the United States, Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, who agreed "to invite all other civilised nations to adhere thereto."

From the British point of view the Naval Treaty remains the most memorable. It has been accepted and acted upon by the Governments concerned, and has brought the idealistic project of disarmament

within the range of practical politics. Limitation was facilitated by the fact that it exposed none of the signatories to attack by any greater Power outside the Treaty, since none existed: and the relative strength of none suffered. The general conditions, too, were peculiarly favourable, inasmuch as the world was tired of war; and economy the prime need of almost every nation. But these considerations in no wise detract from the greatness of America's diplomatic achievement. Being herself the Power least crippled by the war she could have made a bold bid for naval supremacy. She deliberately chose to substitute the principle of agreed limitation of armaments for that of competition; and gained the support of the world's four Principal Powers in eliminating, from the naval sphere, that burden of rival building which diverted wealth and effort from productive purposes, and fed the disease of international jealousy of which it was itself the outgrowth.

# CHAPTER V

## DIPLOMACY OLD AND NEW

"Nought shall make us rue
If England to itself do rest but true."

SHAKESPEARE.

"You must not forsake the ship in a tempest because you cannot keep down the windes . . . but studye and endeavour as much as in you lyethe, to handle the matter wyttelye and handsomelye to the purpose: and that which you cannot turn to good so to order that it be not very badde. For it is not possible for all things to be well unless all men were good. Which I think will not be yet this good many yeares."

Sir THOMAS MORE.

### 1.

THE Washington Conference, the first great international diplomatic gathering at which English displaced French as the official language, was a triumph of the new diplomacy. Secrecy and privacy are abhorrent to Americans, and the negotiations were carried on with great frankness and publicity. The British and American negotiators, at any rate, put their cards upon the table. Others did not; the French at the outset did not sense the new atmosphere. M. Briand went to Washington with the hope, it seems, of playing the part of *tertius gaudens* when Britain and America fell out[1]; and his Delegation put forward a claim to a much greater maximum tonnage than France was allotted or desired, in order that by withdrawing that demand under protest she might, by the ordinary rules of bargaining, have a better chance of establishing her claim to a large fleet of submarines when that point of the agenda was reached. So the old diplomacy showed its head.

To the public eye the difference between the old

diplomacy and the new seems to consist in doing business at conferences instead of in the chanceries and anterooms of professional diplomatists. Although international conferences may henceforth be more frequent, any change, to be real and lasting, must be in the spirit rather than in the method. The main work will continue to be done by the network of diplomatic agents which covers the world. We must seek reform in the democratisation of the regular diplomatic service. It is not suggested that its members should be recruited from any particular stratum of society; but that they should be instilled with a greater sense of accountability to the people of their own country, and should get into touch with the people of that country where they reside. At present they too often take no interest in the people among whom they live. They form a small cosmopolitan coterie, seeing only their own foreign colleagues in the intervals of work. It is an anachronism, too, that ambassadors should continue to be personal representatives of their Sovereign. Less exclusiveness on their part, greater interest in foreign affairs on the part of the public can alone expel the old vice of secret and insincere bargaining between professionals who, in the heat of the game forgot the people whom they misrepresented, and resorted to tricks which by their cleverness won the admiration of rivals, but would have disgusted by their knavery the uninformed public out of doors. Such ruses as altering the lines on maps during the interval which elapsed between the agreement of two negotiators and the presentation of the fair copy for inclusion in the final treaty were resorted to, as we have seen, by the Russian diplomatists at Berlin, and also by Ignatieff in Constantinople in 1876.[2] Casuistic subtleties delighted the dexterous, and even the most upright permitted themselves *uti alieno vitio;* as when (in 1846) the sanctimonious Guizot kept Lord Normanby in play in Paris while the French Ambassador in Madrid, in violation of pledges given by his Government to Lord Palmerston, contrived to arrange for the marriage of the French King's son to

the younger sister, and heiress presumptive, of Queen Isabella of Spain, on the same day that the young Queen herself was united to a reprobate and impotent Spanish prince. "Few intrigues," says the historian Fyffe, "have been more disgraceful than that of the Spanish marriages; none more futile." For the course of history mocked the designs of France's diplomacy.[3] At the time when Frankfort was the Capital of the North German Confederation, the Austrian Government provided its representative there (Count Rechberg) with duplicate instructions, of opposite import, to be used according to circumstances.[4] One set expressed warm friendship for Prussia: the other set hostility. And the great Cavour was full of tricks. Readers of his letters will remember how he arranged with his Minister in London, during the Paris Congress in 1856, to send the latter epistles specially earmarked as suitable for being "served on the breakfast table of Lady Palmerston," whose intimacy the envoy had been instructed to court. And before proceeding to Paris, the great Italian inquired whether Lady Clarendon was going to accompany her husband to the Congress, and if so, whether it would be "bon de lui faire la cour (honnêtement s'entend"[5])! Whether Lady Palmerston saw through the letters which were assiduously posted to her to Broadlands, or Lord Clarendon ever suspected the (most honourable) intentions of Cavour towards his wife, British diplomatic history does not relate; for it is little concerned with such matters. There has always been a sharp contrast between British and Continental methods. It was brought into very clear relief a score of years ago in Washington, when the Ambassadors of Germany, Austria, Russia, France, and Italy tried to trip up their British colleague, Lord Pauncefote, by persuading him, against his inclination, to join in a protest against the American declaration of war on Spain, in 1898. This protest, however, was not endorsed by either the British or other Governments, and was therefore never presented to the United States Government. But four years

later, when Germany had finally failed to draw us into an agreement, and could therefore give free run to her amiable practice of trying to embroil us with everybody else, the news was suddenly published in Berlin that Lord Pauncefote had tried to combine Europe against the United States on the occasion of the Hispano-American War. The despatch which, it was said, owed its inception to him, was published with the sanction of the German Ambassador in Washington, Holleben. The American Government was puzzled; but its trust in Lord Pauncefote's loyal diplomacy was absolute. "We do not yet know all the facts," said Mr Hay, the Secretary of State, "but you may take it from me that he (Lord Pauncefote) will come out all right. It is impossible that he should have done what they say."[6] And the character of Lord Pauncefote may be said to have been the first stone in the bridge which led America from the Venezuelan dispute to co-operation with us in the Great War. The imputation so freely made by Germany, and curiously credited by a section of Englishmen, that English diplomacy has been machiavellian is hardly capable of proof. Referring to Lord Castlereagh fifty years ago, Lord Salisbury wrote: "He was never a boudoir diplomatist. The species does not readily grow in England . . .;" and in our own day Mr Page, the American Ambassador, has paid remarkable tribute to the openness with which it was possible to discuss things with the British Foreign Office. His biographer writes of his relations with Sir Edward Grey: "In their intercourse for the past year, the two men had grown accustomed to disregarding all pretence and diplomatic technique; their discussions had been straightforward man-to-man talks; there had been nothing suggestive of pose or finesse."[7] And it would be easier to name, among Britain's past ambassadors, a hundred who were simple men of honour than half a dozen who were astute intriguers. This description of one, Sir Francis Pakenham, is repeated with varying phraseology in every volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography:*

"He was distinguished for the British qualities of phlegmatic calmness and sturdy good sense. . . . His good nature and hospitality made him very popular with the British communities at the various posts in which he served, and he was successful in maintaining excellent personal relations with the governments to which he was accredited, even when, as in his South American posts, the questions to be discussed were of a nature to occasion some heat." Many have lacked almost too thoroughly the element of suspicion—men like Lord Bloomfield, who was the very type of courteous Victorian gentleman, whose first consideration was for the feelings of others and who was incapable of guile—and yet the Foreign Office so appreciated his character that he was left at his post in Vienna for over a decade. Others have gone almost too far in sympathy with the country to which they have been accredited. Sir Frank Lascelles was very Germanophil in the years before the war. Lord Bryce, in Washington, was devoted to the land whose Constitution he had expounded in a classic work, and he took the American view in the question of reciprocity with Canada in 1911, a view which was whole-heartedly repudiated, at the following election, by that vigorous member of the Empire which he represented.

2.

On his return from Washington in February 1922, Mr Balfour declared the lesson of the Conference to have been "what the world has been slow to learn, that the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole." If a broad spirit of immediate sacrifice for ultimate good supplement the perception of this truth, and the statesmen of the countries concerned show willingness to forego tactical advantages at home or abroad in its maintenance, and if foreign affairs cease to be the shuttlecock of Party in America, the peculiar difficulties confronting the execution of the Washington principles in the Far Eastern Treaty may

possibly be overcome. One of the parties thereto is in the throes of a convulsion which may at any moment give supreme power to a military or civil clique which will in future, perhaps, hold itself neither concerned with nor bound by resolutions signed by rivals at Washington some years before. And in the Pacific Treaty the signatories undertake to communicate "fully and frankly" with one another. Full and frank dealings are against the very nature of orientals; and it is difficult to believe that the habits of the Far East will so completely change, that no Japanese official will any longer enter the Chinese services for the purposes of his native government, or that any paper agreement can prevent coins from the Tokyo treasury finding their destination in a Chinaman's palm. National characteristics change but little; and we find in almost every race a fundamental, half-conscious policy which has persisted through many centuries. France has ever been first and foremost concerned with the safety of her north-eastern frontier; Prussia has ever had the boundaries which her armies have won. Russia's impulse is to a southern sea, Britain's to other lands across the seas that surround her. The Monroe doctrine is still an axiom of American policy, and, in spite of Mr Wilson's vision of the dawn of a new day which would bring America into Europe, George Washington's immortal warning against entanglement in the Old World still seems to respond more truly to American instinct. If then Japan, with 350 inhabitants in every square mile compared to the 31 of the United States, has an instinctive momentum to expansion, who has the right, or the power, to repress it? It is the task of diplomacy to find the most convenient outlet for the Japanese; for the most enduring statecraft is that which conforms to the trend of events. "The task of a statesman," said Bismarck, "consists only in listening carefully whether he can catch an echo of the strides of the Almighty through the events of this world, and then to spring forward and seize the hem of His garment."[8] Had

the greatest statesman of the nineteenth century never proceeded in practice beyond this principle he would not have bequeathed to his country the disastrous doctrine that force unchecked by ethical laws must be the foundation of policy. Lord Salisbury's realism may be taken as the British counterpart of German *real politik*. To face the facts, keeping hypotheses in the background; to eschew chimeras, to abominate cant and sentimentality, while conforming to moral law and the trend of events, was the realism of England's greatest Foreign Minister. To the realist an alliance may be the means of reaching a goal, but is never an end in itself. Many a minor politician has mistaken the shadow for the substance, and made an alliance or acquired a strip of territory for the sake of scoring a diplomatic success. The unrealities and the insincerities of pre-war Continental diplomacy were the cause of half of Europe's troubles. When, for instance, the Balkan States formed their alliance (1912) for expelling Turkey from Macedonia, it was constantly described by the Russian diplomatists Isvolsky and Sazonoff, who were cognisant of its full scope, as an "essentially pacific" understanding,[9] in order to lull French and British curiosity. And the very personification of make-believe was Count Berchtold, Austria's Minister of State in 1914. He had been chosen as Aehrenthal's successor chiefly on account of his social eminence and great wealth, and because he happened to be both an Austrian feudal lord and a Hungarian magnate. He was a typical Viennese aristocrat, a "perfect gentleman" to those whom he accepted as equals, a bully to the subject races of the Monarchy, whom it was the fashion to regard as menial: the soul of honour at the card-table or on the race-course, a practised deceiver in his Chancery. His glib tongue delivered speech after speech in 1914 which abounded in allusions to the harmony of the Great Powers and the excellent relations in which Austria stood with all her neighbours: in particular denoting Serbia, whom he tried to induce Italy to join in despoiling in 1913,

and whom in 1914 he intended to destroy. During that last desperate week of July, when Sir Edward Grey was devoting the last ounce of his strength and the last minute of his time to preserve peace, he spent several hours at race-meetings, before flinging his country light-heartedly into a war in which two-thirds of its peoples found themselves in sympathy with one or other of the opposing forces. Rumanes stood in the ranks against Roumania, Italian irredentists were enrolled to defeat the aspirations of their race: Croatians withstood by compulsion the Greater Serbia which they hoped to see established: Czechs found themselves opposed to Russians whom they regarded as deliverers; and when, in an agony of alternatives, some of the Bohemian regiments chose rather to break their oath of allegiance than to fight against their friends, rows of race-patriots were hanged from the trees of Prague. There was no bitterness in all the war greater than that of soldiers who had to kill their kinsmen or to mutiny; and the tragedy was a logical consequence of selfish statecraft and insincere diplomacy.

3.

When the writer travelled round Europe after the war he discovered one rule to which there was hardly an exception—that neighbouring countries hated one another. And the converse generally held good, that each loved the next but one! These hatreds and combinations, the outcome of centuries of race-rivalry, in which the instincts of domination and preservation have been perpetually opposed, cannot be wizarded away. They are the realities of Europe. The hatred of Czechs for Hungarians, Hungarians for Roumanians, Greeks for Bulgars—in every case reciprocated—are (for the present) calculable factors. So are the rivalries of France and Italy in the Mediterranean, and of Italy and Greece in its north-eastern waters. The Bulgarian Government, itself determined under M. Stambolisky to abide by the Peace of Neuilly, may suddenly find its

hands forced by the insubordinate Macedo-Bulgars. The fiery Magyars must be watched, or they will attempt to recover Transylvania, which was theirs for a thousand years, and contains a large and compact number of particularly patriotic Hungarians. The pacific Bolshevist Government may find it conducive to the popularity of its principles to recover Bessarabia, where even the Rumane population is notoriously dissatisfied with Roumanian rule. Vengeance is a deep and (they consider) an honourable trait of the Balkan peoples.

Our history and our geography indicate the double role of this island—detached from but part of Europe—to conciliate animosities, as far as is humanly possible: and to interpret Europe to America. We are ourselves, with Canada, Jamaica, Honduras, and other possessions, an American Power. We prefer the diplomatic methods of our transatlantic kinsmen. But we are unable, though we have often tried, to dissociate ourselves from Europe. As Mr Gladstone wrote in 1869: "I do not believe that England ever will or can be unfaithful to her great tradition, or can forswear her interest in the common transactions and the general interests of Europe."[10] We are a connecting link between the United States and Europe. The American Government has lately passed a Funding Bill providing for the repayment of Allied debts on terms unfavourable to Europe. It has refused to deliberate with the Allies for the economic reconstruction of Europe. It has sharply reminded France that money is overdue for the maintenance of the American forces on the Rhine. These demands have been explained as a hint that if less money were spent on military armaments more might be available for other purposes. It is for British diplomacy to explain the European view. The French desired, and temporarily obtained, a pact with Britain and America. Had this pact, as she hoped, been worked out in detail, France would have known exactly what additional military forces she could count upon in case of need, and have reduced her own army

accordingly. But America repudiated the pact. America also repudiated the Covenant of the League of Nations, whereof Article 10 afforded security to France. France, therefore, must seek allies where she may; and a system of militaristic alliances is being created. Such a system is pregnant with danger to the peace of Europe. And if we are properly to exercise the conciliatory influence among other nations which Lord Grey believes to be the peculiar task of Britain, our hands must be unfettered. We must seek for ourselves not the old isolation, nor new entanglements, but detachment.

4.

We have spoken of Britain as an American Power. She is also an Asiatic Power, and a Moslem Power: a North African Power and a South African Power: an Australasian and a European Power: and also, we might add, the champion of Zionism. This world-wide complexity of interests makes it impossible for us, in any major international question, to have a simple, determinate policy aiming at one clear objective. What pleases ourselves may not suit Canada, to serve Indian interests may not advance those of Australia or South Africa. The British Foreign Secretary can only hope to reduce to its biggest common factor the interests of all and then achieve as much as may be practicable. If it amount to very little compared to what is desirable, history, perhaps, will judge by disaster avoided as much as by positive achievement. If an eminent agriculturist were asked to formulate a general, uniform land policy for this country, he would probably reply that the variations of soil, of climate, and of local customs made such uniformity impossible. So our foreign policy can never be guided by pigeon-holed formulæ. A real study of history—not the hasty perusal of syncopated world-histories—may help; but "l'histoire ne résout pas les questions: elle nous apprend à les examiner." To examine each problem as it arises, and to make apt application of the general

political principles which the nation holds to be good, is the task of the Foreign Secretary. And the general principles which the nation, in the majority, has accepted after the Great War are those embodied in the League of Nations. The Covenant of the League must be the charter of British Foreign policy.

The articles of this Covenant postulate reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety: preservation of the territorial integrity and political independence of all members of the League: "wise and effectual" action against war or any threat of war: submission of any dispute among its own members to the League before any rupture be made: establishment of a permanent Court of International Justice: investigation of the facts of an international dispute and their publication: registration, at the League Headquarters, of all international treaties or engagements, no engagements being binding unless so registered: reconsideration of treaties which have become inapplicable; further, provisions are made for securing fair and humane treatment of labour internationally, for the promotion of Red Cross work, and for the establishment of the Mandate system of rule over backward peoples. Article 21 lays down that "nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international engagements, such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings like the Monroe doctrine, for securing the maintenance of peace." Lastly, according to Article 16, if any Member of the League resort to war in disregard to its injunctions it shall be deemed to be at war, *ipso facto*, with all the other members, who undertake to establish immediately an economic boycott against, and to sever all personal and financial intercourse with, the offender: and the several Governments of the League States shall be recommended what military, naval, or air forces they shall severally contribute to protect the covenants of the League.

The clumsiness of the machinery of the League is very palpable. It is elaborate and unwieldy; and in

all important matters its Council is only entitled to act by unanimity, which means that any one of its ten members, great or small, can paralyse its action by dissent.[11] It is not in accordance with realities that in the Council Greece should have equal power with France, or that in the Assembly Holland, for instance, should rank no higher than Albania, a conglomerate of tribes in a mountainous country which contains no University, hardly even a town, few roads, and no railway.[12]

Yet the League, besides executing certain valuable international services connected with waterways, railways, posts, and such matters as passports, Red Cross work, disease, and traffic in human lives, gives international sanction to those ideals and those principles of justice and fair dealing between nations for which, more than anything else, 950,000 Britons gave their lives. It substitutes the ideal of rivalry in accomplishment of good for rivalry in the prevention of good in others—of healthy competition and free growth for the mutual stunting of national ambitions, and establishes the maxim realised at Washington that each nation's interests are promoted by international welfare. It deals a direct blow at an evil of the old diplomacy by making secret treaties between any of its members absolutely useless. Since each country has signed an article that treaties are invalid unless publicly registered, it can at any moment repudiate the secret treaty with the same facility and with less loss of self-respect than it repudiated its signature of the Covenant.

If it become the policy of the British Commonwealth to stand unflinchingly behind the doctrines enunciated by the League, the clumsiness of its machinery becomes a secondary matter. If our diplomacy regain the prestige which it has lost since the war, Britain's will should be sufficient to ensure the execution of its decrees. The League is not an executive body; it is, as its own Article 16 avows, based upon force in the last resort, and it has no specific force at its disposal. It should therefore become avowedly deliberative and

consultative. To focus world-opinion as to the rights and wrongs of any international dispute, and to indicate an impartial solution, is no small service; for no civilised nation cares to flout the moral sense of the world. The League, too, may often be in a position to suggest a compromise in those quarrels, so frequent in the past, where *amour-propre* alone prevented either disputant from making the first concession. To yield to the formulated decision of the world is clearly easier than to yield to the demand of a rival. And our diplomacy outside the League must be in harmony with our activities within it. It will introduce a novel complication into international affairs if nations are Dr Jekylls in Geneva and Mr Hydes at home.

5.

Support of the League, then, will probably take the place of the Balance of Power as the guiding principle of British foreign policy—though, if it should not be possible to enforce the League's doctrines, Britain might be forgiven for reviving the system which saved Western Europe in turn from being dominated by Spain, by the France of Louis XIV., and of Napoleon I., and by the Germany of William II. The charge of fickleness which Continental critics used to make against Perfide Albion had, as we noted in Chapter I. of Part I., some foundation; but our mutability was not all perfidiousness. It sprang as much from the varying relations of one Continental State to another as from the caprices of British egotism; and our armies were generally to be found in support of the weaker nations against the stronger—especially when one of the weaker happened to be the owner of Antwerp, so aptly termed by Napoleon a pistol pointed at England's head. And if we are to support each and every nation that proves its allegiance to the League Covenant, we cannot pledge ourselves to invariable support of any one nation. If we are friendly to all, we have to face the contingency that two of our friends may quarrel.

Our own detachment is imperatively demanded. The League system must eliminate militaristic alliances or it will have failed. If Germany and Russia cement the bond of misfortune which at present holds them together into an offensive and defensive alliance, Europe will be once more divided into two armed camps.[13] The principles of the League and of militaristic alliances are inconsistent. And if British diplomacy strive to lead the first to triumph, to conclude a military pact with France would be to put a boulder in the path which might prove irremovable. By his unfortunate habit of bargaining with principles, Mr Lloyd-George has placed us in a position of being bound in honour to offer France our succour in case of unprovoked aggression. If such an alliance conforms explicitly to Article 10 of the League Covenant, it is only an affirmation of an obligation already incurred. If it extend beyond that limit, and contain military stipulations, it will unite us militarily with Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Roumania, and Yugo-Slavia, who are already bound to France in defensive alliance. Thus the situation of 1914 will be recreated. The vast network of alliances then existing made local and partial wars impossible.[14] For fear of a general conflagration the Great Powers set themselves to repress minor quarrels which had much better have been settled at once. Gunpowder becomes more dangerous the more it is compressed. Each State, unable to gain even legitimate ends either by diplomacy or by war, fortified itself by alliances for the almost inevitable explosion, and dragged others into the quarrel. The real dispute between Austria and Serbia was little more than a question of "Home Rule" for Serbians, but it involved first a Continent, and then the world. To localise a war may be better than to suppress it.

If the new spirit of international collaboration is to be allowed to operate, if Western Europe at least is to develop its peaceful interdependence, if the best elements in international Labour are to draw the world's workers together in fruitful production, Germany must be

allowed to enter the League of Nations: nor can Russia be excluded, from the moment she obtain a government competent to perform a government's domestic functions and disposed to discharge its international obligations.

6.

The championship of the League principles, tending to the maintenance of peace, is a British interest no less than a British duty, since the prosperity of our highly-industrialised community is specially dependent on the smooth working of international trade. No less to our interest is it to make efficient the Mandate system instituted by the League for the government of backward races, by insisting on the presentation and scrutiny of the report which every Mandatory is required annually to submit. Perhaps the most potent of all the causes of war which history reveals has been the decay of nations. In an interesting passage in his history of the Jewish Church, Dean Stanley traces the course of civilisation as it ran westward from Chaldæa and Persia through Egypt, Greece, and Rome; and after the decline of those States, the "Central man of the world" may be said to have been found in Spain, in France, and lastly in Britain. In the past civilisation kept ever south of the great mountain wall, the backbone of the world, which stretches from the Himalayas, by the Zagros and Elburz ranges, through the Taurus and Caucasus to the Carpathians and the Alps. "On the northern or darker side," he continues, "behind this mighty screen were restrained and nurtured the fierce tribes which have from time to time descended to scourge or regenerate the civilisation of the South."[15] Warlike invasions have been the means of a nation's rejuvenation. War punishes decadence. It has provided the rough and ready means whereby effete nations have been replaced by sturdier and healthier stock; it has transferred difficult tasks from feeble into stronger hands. Even the Turks, when they broke

into Europe, brought a better administration than most of the invaded region at the moment enjoyed; when Turkish rule miserably decayed war drove it forth. Not many people will deny that the Cubans have greatly benefited since their island was torn, in war, from the failing grasp of Spain, and endowed with a decent administration, and ultimately accorded independence by America. Ceylon, we may claim, is better off to-day than it was when Portugal held it. And when the Dutch of South Africa rallied to the British cause in 1914, they paid a signal tribute to the value of the rule which their conquerors had brought them a dozen years before. If a nation maladministers its territories the League must devise another method as good as that of war for giving the task into fitter hands. Otherwise misgovernment will prosper; and a nation may be allowed to sink into sloth and luxury, and to impoverish its provinces, trusting all the while to be shielded by others from the consequences of its remissness. The League would be broken into splinters if it should ever become a machine for maintaining the *status quo.*

7.

But the most immediate task of Britain, in connection with foreign relations, is to set her own house in order, to make the Commonwealth and the Empire, compound of every race and every creed, and every stage of culture, an effective instrument in world-policy. We do not advocate the impetuous imposition of a written Constitution on the Empire; but it is not logical, nor is it practicable, that our Dominions should continue to sign treaties separately and to claim the protection of English Consular officials for their citizens residing abroad. We do not forget the rebuke of Lord Salisbury to jingoistic legislators during the Boer War (April 1900): "Institutions which are due to legislation are infinitely weaker compared with those that have grown up under the

impulse of the aspirations and of the instincts of the people whom they concern . . . if you will only allow it to grow by its own laws, in accordance with the impulse of its own vitality, it will undoubtedly exercise an influence over the character and the progress and the hopes of the world such as has never been exercised by any Empire before." This warning does not preclude organisation of an impulse which has shown its vitality—in fact by implication enjoins it. And the impulse towards unification of imperial policy undoubtedly exists. It was shown repeatedly at Paris; and at the Conference of Dominion Prime Ministers held in London in the summer of 1921 even the question of British policy in Upper Silesia was very eagerly discussed. Some definition of procedure is becoming urgently necessary against the event of a sudden international crisis when the Dominion Premiers are in their separate countries. Does the independence of the Dominions mean (as has been maliciously suggested) that none can depend upon the other? There cannot be complete equality of status if the Commonwealth is to have a concerted foreign policy. It is not difficult to imagine the rise of a situation concerning the interests of New Zealand, or India, or South Africa, in which the interests of other parts of the Commonwealth would not be identical with those of the member most directly affected. The crisis might be sudden and sharp. A very regrettable discord might ensue. The trend of events is for each Dominion to have its Minister for External Relations; and having got its Foreign Secretary, it should then have its Ambassadors—an Ambassador perhaps in London, and Ministers or Envoys in the other Dominions, possibly also at Washington, and in some of the other great Capitals. Their task would be to represent their particular British viewpoint. But they would be unequivocally subordinate to the Ambassador from London. The multiple representation of Bavaria and Saxony and Prussia did not weaken, it strengthened, German foreign policy.

Britain is capable of using the creative forces of democracy and nationality, and checking their disintegrating elements, without resorting to the rigid methods of German statecraft. It would, on the contrary, be most desirable that the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom should be entitled to delegate his supreme authority to a Dominion Foreign Secretary in any specified question, in which that Dominion's interest was paramount. Thus each, in turn, as its own position was involved, would speak with the voice of the British Commonwealth. And finally, should the reform of the House of Lords be taken in hand, the Dominion Ambassadors resident in London might be created its honorary members. Room could also be found, we venture to suggest, by the definite exclusion of its present absentee and sometimes congenitally incompetent members, to give retired British Ambassadors the right to sit. The atmosphere of the Upper House would be by no means unsuitable for the discussion of imperial foreign policy by representatives of the young and vigorous Dominions sitting side by side with the veterans of British Diplomacy.

8.

Some such organisation is necessary to keep our imperial machinery in close relation to the normal process of time and growth. And because of foreign policy's relationship to national defence, our diplomacy must adjust itself to the new disposition of power in which the British navy shares supremacy of the seas with America. Whatever differences we may have had, or may again have, with that great nation, our political ideals are the same. We stand for liberty and justice, for fair and honest dealings between nations, for democracy, and government for the benefit of the governed. We educate the backward races of the world to fitness for self rule, and for that liberty which, in the last analysis, is security — security against tyranny at home and aggression from abroad. As

an American writer has said, we seek not to impose the burden of our dominion but to bestow the boon of constitutional sovereignty. We have learnt to control without fuss, to settle difficulties and let others get the credit. We now are ready to share with America what Mr Gladstone described as "a trust and a function given from Providence as special and as remarkable as ever was entrusted to any portion of the family of man." If Mr Page, that great American friend of Britain, foresaw the assumption by his own countrymen of the leadership of the English-speaking race, we must counter his anticipation by proving our continued fitness for the position which we now hold. To maintain it the character of our diplomacy does not need to be changed. Only its methods will no doubt be brought into line with new developments, such as the propaganda which is activated everywhere by the Press and the cinematograph; and conformed to the healthy growth of public interest in foreign affairs.

A great diplomatist of the old school is thus depicted by Lord Newton. The character of Lord Lyons, he says, is reproduced in his correspondence. In all that he wrote during a period extending over thirty years, "there is hardly to be found an unnecessary sentence or even a redundant epithet; there is a total absence of any straining after effect, of exaggeration, of personal animosity or predilection, or of any desire to gain his ends by intrigue or trickery . . . they are marked by profound mastery of detail, sound judgment, inexhaustible patience, an almost inhuman impartiality, and an obviously single-minded desire to do his best for his country." On the other hand, his reticence was perhaps exaggerated; and he "moved in too restricted a circle . . . keeping the Press at arm's length."[16] To-day diplomacy rests more broadly upon popular opinion. It is no longer enough to know, as Lord Lyons always knew, what were the views held at Chatsworth, Knowsley, Hatfield, and Bowood; the whole nation counts; and the Press is, or should be, the echo of its opinions, and the regular intermediary,

in supplement to Parliament and in lieu of it when it is in recess, between the Government and the people, the instrument for the interchange of official and non-official ideas. Pressmen have established the right to appear at the Foreign Office as representatives of a public which, while occupied primarily with its own avocations, is genuinely interested in the country's foreign policy; and they have been present at actual discussions by the League of Nations on vexed and very controversial matters, such as the Polish-Lithuanian frontier dispute. It may be that the historian of the future will note the moment when, during its first Assembly, the League went into Committee on the question of armaments in full view of the public, as an epoch-making innovation in diplomatic methods.

The most extreme advocates of open diplomacy, however, do not seek to prohibit private negotiation altogether. The wisest and most honourable plans may be marred by premature loquacity; and its prohibition would be impracticable even if desirable, for nobody could prevent negotiators from meeting alone, for instance, at luncheon or at dinner. If an honest report of the proceedings is published at their conclusion the public will be satisfied. But the publicity must be honest. To inform and enlighten must really be the purpose of the *communiqué*. Too many of the formulæ published after recent meetings have appeared to be carefully drafted so as to ignore the real issue and to be capable of different interpretations which will suit the discordant views of those between whom harmony is said to have been established. "There is both too much limelight and too much secrecy," said Viscount Grey at Edinburgh, on 27th January 1922, referring to the diplomatic methods of the present Government; and the limelight has too often blinded rather than enlightened. Better to hold the Press at arm's length than to admit journalists to intimacy only to repudiate them later: better, too, to have the public ignorant than to dupe it. When Mr Lloyd-George said that

"Germany must pay the costs of the war up to the limit of her capacity to do so" (29th November 1918, at Newcastle-on-Tyne), he had already agreed to Mr Wilson's stipulations which excluded the demand for an indemnity: when he said, in his communication to the Press of 6th December 1918, "The Kaiser must be prosecuted," he had either not taken the trouble to inquire at the Dutch Legation whether the Kaiser would be given up by Holland, or, having inquired, he felt confident that the trial could never take place: when he spoke, in the same communication, and in his speech at Bristol on 11th December 1918, of bringing the "accomplices" of the Kaiser to justice, he gave no hint of the impracticability of such an undertaking: when he invited M. Krassin to London he invested him with a spurious character. If these deceptions were not deliberate they at least lend force to the claim of Lord Grey that the foreign policy of the country should be in the hands of men who "have special qualifications for the work, and are able to give their whole time and attention to it," and who are able, like Lord Salisbury, so carefully to think out their line of conduct beforehand that they do not quickly change it, and can readily turn any unexpected incident that may arise so as best to subserve their main purpose.

The old diplomatic machinery need not be scrapped; it must only be brought up to date. The axioms of diplomacy have not changed. The firm establishment of the League of Nations' principles would not invalidate the truth of Lord Rosebery's aphorism that "cordiality as between nations can only rest on mutual self-respect"; and we can still agree with Lord Salisbury that "what we have to do is simply to perform our own part with honour; to abstain from a meddling diplomacy; to uphold England's honour steadily and fearlessly, and always to be rather prone to let action go along with words than to let it lag behind them."[17] We may also cordially endorse the sentiments expressed by Mr Lloyd-George after three years' experience of diplomacy. "There is no virtue

which one ought to have to draw his cheques oftener upon than that of patience," he declared to the assembled journalists at Genoa (26th April 1922); and again in the House of Commons a month later, "It is the business of statesmen to look ahead" (25th May 1922). And when Mr Balfour was publicly welcomed on his return from Washington, the Prime Minister remarked: "Men who deal with international matters in a haggling spirit have missed their vocation, they are not meant for statesmanship, but for horse dealing." In his previous diplomacy, unfortunately, Mr Lloyd-George has hurried, has haggled, and has refused to consider ulterior consequences. But he is apparently still receptive, and England may make a statesman of him yet. It is precisely in the divorce of his acts from his words that has hitherto lain the damaging effect of his diplomacy. England's word used to be her bond. The words of her official spokesman are not now so considered on the Continent of Europe or in the Middle East, where our diplomacy, in the words of Sir Valentine Chirol, has cost us our reputation for good faith "which has been hitherto our greatest asset throughout the East."[18] Our diplomatic credit has been shaken. Financiers explain that the greater the ratio of currency to assets the smaller is the value of the currency unit: an unsupported volume of currency destroys its own efficacy. So words unsupported by acts, or the readiness to act, undermine the credit of diplomacy. The lightest warning from Lord Salisbury, the careful understatement of Lord Grey, carried more weight than prodigal protestations from Mr Lloyd-George. Every discarded undertaking impairs the power of our diplomacy unaided to obtain results. It can ensure the success of the policy which it indicates without resort to force only if the world understands that Britain implements, or does what is humanly possible to implement, all her contracts. Diplomacy is long-term business. Prestige is slowly accumulated, as the fame of a banking-house is

gradually built up; it brings economy of effort and warless achievement. "You have seen enough of diplomacy," wrote Lord Lyons after forty years of professional service, "to know how much success in all questions of Foreign Policy depends upon the prestige of the country one represents."[19] And national prestige depends not least upon the good faith of its foreign policy, and the character of those who are charged with its execution.

Britain's diplomatists represent, for good or for ill, the world's greatest political force. The thoughts of an Englishman turn most readily towards the Imperial structure which his forefathers have raised and which now includes a quarter of the world's inhabitants and covers a quarter of its surface. Let them sometimes turn also to the diplomatists who, over the other three-quarters of the globe, personify this Commonwealth of nations: who have to defend its interests, and who stand among foreigners for the principles which have made it great: who have to support, and to secure from unlawful molestation, all those who, in many capacities and in every climate do the work of England and form communities which typify to the strangers round them the country whence they come; and who themselves, soon to be reinforced by representatives of the younger branches of our race, have to maintain before the world the high reputation of an English gentleman which has been established by those who have gone before.

# APPENDIX

The figures in brackets refer to the pages of this book.

## CHAPTER I

1. H. du Parcq, *David Lloyd-George*, p. 17.
2. Every Welsh preacher, I understand, is expected to work up to a climax, known as Hwyl, in the course of his address. It has been described to me by one of them as "feeling and fire, a jubilant refrain"—and the preacher "whose soul has caught the Hwyl" is held to express his meaning by his whole bearing. The good man's wife (being English born) informs me that she dislikes it very much. "They are carried to the extreme with it," she writes, "I feel they are going mad. But a Welsh preacher would be no good without it." (p. 280.)
3. See Lord Grey's speech at Edinburgh, 27th January 1922, when he said that the two agreements might have been completed but for the fact that he had stipulated that they must be published when completed, to which Germany objected. (p. 286.)
4. Lémonon, *L'Europe et la politique britannique*, p. 392. The Convention was published in the *Echo de Paris* of 25th November 1911. (p. 286.)
5. Lémonon, p. 83.

## CHAPTER II

1. The estimate of Mr Hoover, the American Food Supply expert. See A. E. Zimmern, *Europe in Convalescence* (First Edition), pp. 28 and 29. (p. 291.)
2. The countries officially at war with Germany were:—

U.S.A.
Belgium.
Bolivia.
Brazil.
British Empire:—
Canada.
Australia.
South Africa.
New Zealand.
India.
China.
Ecuador.
Cuba.
France.
Greece.
Guatemala.
Haiti.
Hejaz.
Honduras.
Italy.
Japan.
Liberia.
Nicaragua.
Panama.
Peru.
Poland.
Portugal.
Roumania.
Serb-Croat-Slovene State.
Siam.
Czecho-Slovakia.
Uruguay.

3. *History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, Temperley, vol. i., p. 246.
4. At the opening of the Congress none of the British "experts" on one country had ever been in that country. Temperley, vol. i., p. 244, footnote. (p. 293.)
5. Mandell Creighton, *Thomas Wolsey*, p. 21.
6. Lansing, *The Big Four*, pp. 99, 102, and 84.
7. Zimmern, pp. 198-203.
8. Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, pp. 172-177, and see the Appendix of the American semi-official history, "What really happened at Paris." Also documents published in the *Manchester Guardian* of 7th, 9th, and 14th March 1922. (p. 301.)
9. Memorandum circulated by the British Prime Minister in Paris, 25th March 1919. Published 1922 (Cmd. 1614).
10. *World's Work*, November 1921, p. 536; remark made by Sir Edward Grey to Mr Walter Page on 4th August 1914.
11. Zimmern, pp. 107, 108.
12. S. Huddleston, *Peace-making at Paris*, pp. 232, 233.

## CHAPTER III

1. An interesting account of the extraordinarily primitive customs of this people is given in the German pamphlet *Weiss-ruthenien* (Karl Curtius, Berlin). (p. 315.)
2. Sir Basil Thomson, ex-chief of the Special Branch at Scotland Yard, in *The Times*, 7th December 1921.
3. Speech by Mr Lloyd-George in the House of Commons, 15th March 1920.
4. Account given to the author, in Warsaw, by Prince Sapieha, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, on 15th July 1920. (p. 322.)
5. Account given to the author by the second Polish delegate to Spa, on 19th July 1920. (p. 322.)
6. Though news of Bolshevist movements was generally vague, this was accepted in London as well as in Warsaw. The Prime Minister said in the House of Commons on 29th July: "The information we have on the subject of the Bolshevist advance is that it has slowed down a good deal."

   It is a conviction of the writer's that had Britain shown herself in earnest, the Bolshevist armies would never have crossed the "Congress" frontier of Poland. (p. 325.)
7. A notable exception was the Papal Nuncio, Ratti, who remained in Warsaw. He has since been elected Pope. (p. 330.)

## CHAPTER IV

1. Lord Morley, *Walpole*, p. 200.
2. *Makers of the New World* (Anonymous), p. 8.
3. *Coningsby*, Book I., chap. vii.
4. In the absence of any Blue Book on the subject, it is difficult to know exactly what happened between the British and French Prime Ministers at Spa. According to *The Times* Mr Lloyd-George threatened to break off the Entente, but this has been officially contradicted. See Mr A. Chamberlain's reply to Sir J. Norton-Griffiths in the House of Commons on 30th March 1922, which was, however, obviously an incomplete summary of the negotiations. (p. 348.)
5. The number of genuine supporters of Sovietism in Russia has been computed by impartial observers, and by some of the revolutionary leaders themselves, as something over half a million in a total population of 125,000,000. In his speech in the House of Commons on 25th May 1922 the Prime Minister said that 95 per cent. of the Russian people were "indifferent or hostile" to the Soviet régime.
6. "Genoa (*sic*) might redress exchanges. It might improve currencies. But it would not have accomplished the main purpose for which it was summoned unless it cleared up difficulties which were full of menace, and ended in a real pact of peace." Speech by Mr Lloyd-George to the Anglo-American Press at Genoa, 26th April 1922. (p. 358.)
7. Walter Bagehot, quoted by Clive Bigham, *Prime Ministers of Britain*, p. 7.
8. Lady G. Cecil, *Life of Lord Salisbury*, vol. ii., p. 286.
9. *Revue des Deux Mondes*, March 1920.
10. Sir Maurice Hankey, "Diplomacy by Conference." Paper read before the British Institute for International Affairs, and afterwards published in the *Round Table*.
11. G. de Manteyer, *Austria's Peace Offer*, 1916-1917, pp. 168 and 169.

## CHAPTER V

1. The statement that M. Briand, on landing in Washington, made to the State Department the offer of France's naval bases in home and colonial waters in any war against Great

Britain, was circulated on good authority, but has since been officially denied. (p. 370.)

2. Lady G. Cecil, *Life of Lord Salisbury*, vol. ii., p. 110.
3. Fyffe, *History of Modern Europe*, vol. ii., p. 506.
4. Reinsch, *Secret Diplomacy*, p. 49.
5. Bianchi, *La Politique du Comte C. de Cavour*, Letters 74 and 61.
6. I am indebted for this information to Lady Bromley and Hon. S. Pauncefote, daughters of the late Ambassador, and for some of the details to *The Times* obituary notice. (p. 373.)
7. *World's Work*, November 1921, p. 535.
8. Max Bewer, *Bismarck*, p. 9. The middle phrase, which I have translated freely, runs in the original "ob er die Schritte des Allmächtigen durch den Gang der Ereignisse hallen höre." (p. 375.)
9. Poincaré, *The Origins of the War*, pp. 114-117.
10. Lord Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. ii., p. 317.
11. See "A Programme for the British Commonwealth," in the *Round Table* for March 1922.
12. I have not visited Albania since the war, but I saw enough of it just before to doubt whether the cultivated Europeanised gentlemen who represent it at the League are at all typical or representative of their countrymen. (p. 381.)
13. Such an alliance would not, I believe, long survive prosperity. The racial antagonism between Slav and Teuton is too acute. Its contraction may even help to discredit Bolshevism with the Russian masses. (p. 383.)
14. See an article by J. W. Headlam Morley in the *Quarterly Review*, January 1922, "Russian Diplomacy before the War." (p. 383.)
15. Stanley, *The Jewish Church*, vol. iii., pp. 49 *et seq.*
16. Lord Newton, *Life of Lord Lyons*, pp. 551 and 431.
17. Pulling, *Life and Speeches of Lord Salisbury*, vol. i., p. 68, quoted in *Dict. Nat. Biography*, 2nd Supplement, "Cecil."
18. Letter to *The Times*, 28th January 1922.
19. Lord Newton, p. 422.

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For the years since 1914 I have had to rely upon *The Times*, monthly reviews, such official information as has been published, and much semi-official matter which has been kindly placed at my disposal.

I have to express my warm gratitude to Lord Sanderson for his help and advice in selecting material and appraising its accuracy.

To Sir Valentine Chirol I am already bound by many ties of gratitude. The Introduction which he has contributed to this volume is only the last of many kindnesses—and I appreciate it all the more because I am aware that my views are not always his.

I am greatly indebted to Mr Ebbutt and Miss Lake, both of the Staff of *The Times*, for their much appreciated help in research and verification; and to *The Times* Management, and Mr C. E. Shepherd, for the use of seven inset maps which have appeared in that newspaper.

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